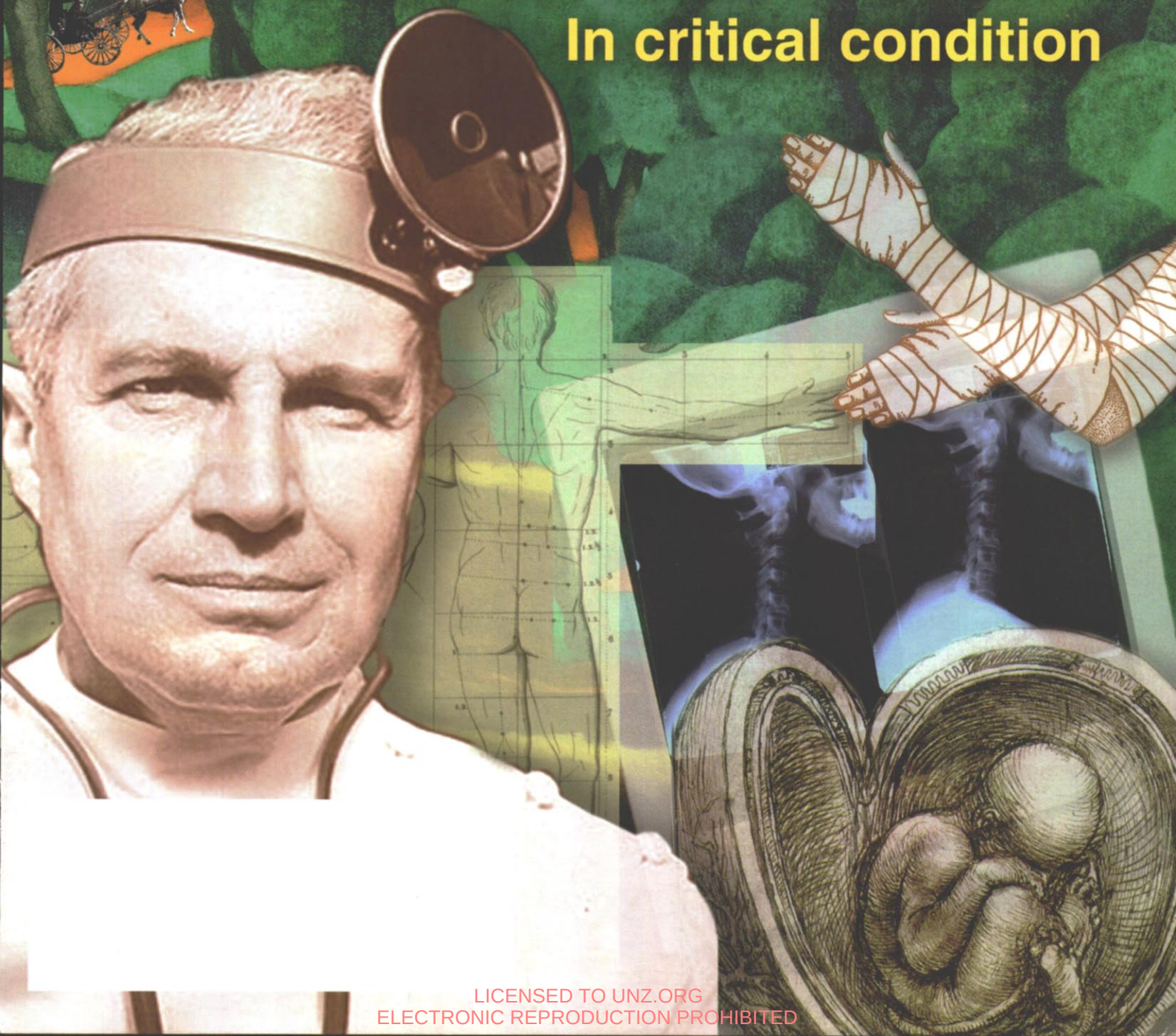
California's Big-City Mayors

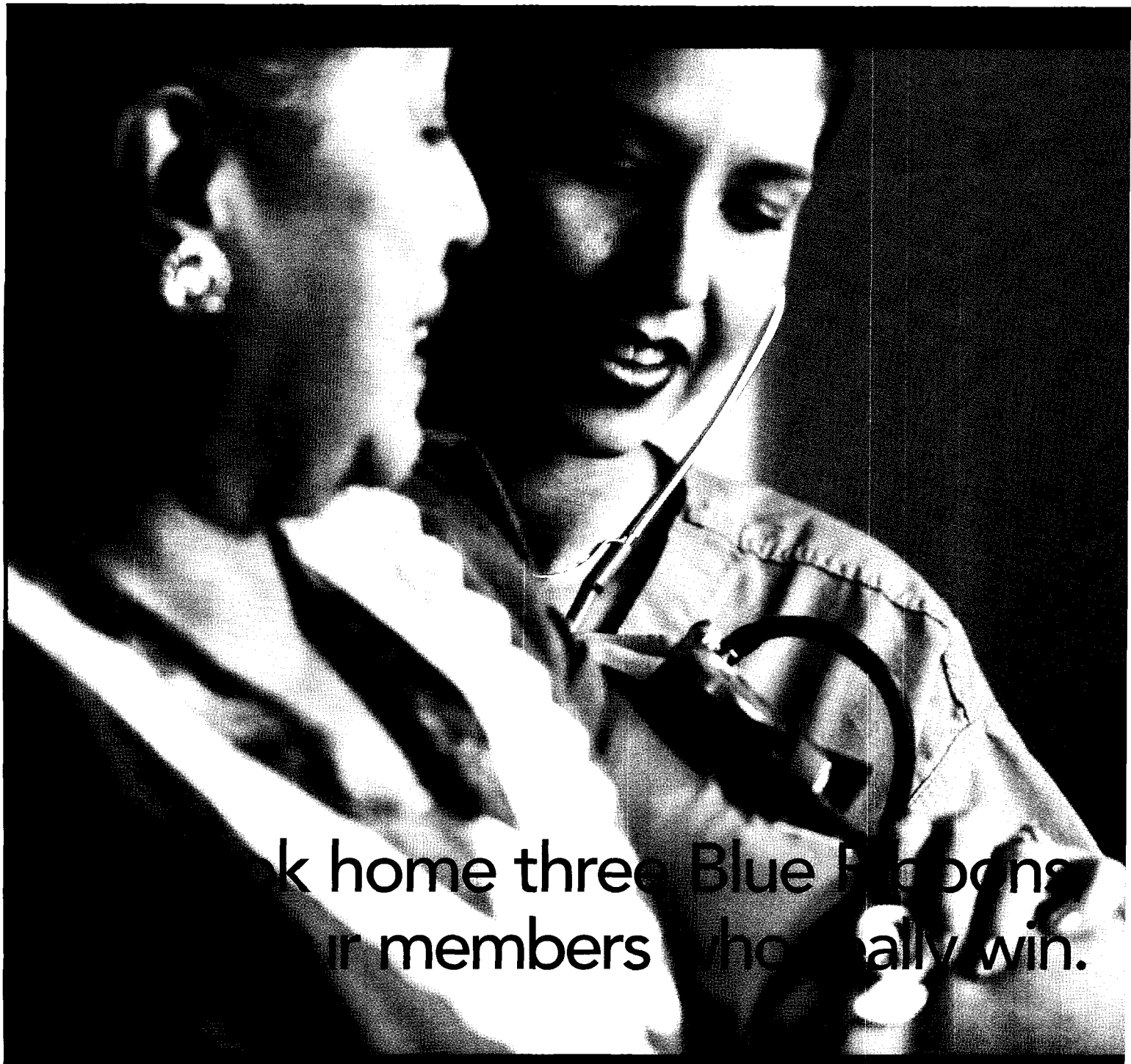
California JOURNAL

APRIL 2001
$3.95
a State Net Publication

Rural Heath Care:
In critical condition



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



When a coalition of 45 large health care purchasers evaluated more than 200 medical groups and 20 health plans in California, one stood out above the rest. Kaiser Foundation Health Plan won the Pacific Business Group on Health's (PBGH) only HMO Blue Ribbon for outstanding health care.

Two more Blue Ribbons for quality and value were awarded to The Permanente Medical Group (Northern California) and Southern California Permanente Medical Group. Of course, we're honored. But we're even more pleased to know our members benefit from our award-winning care, leadership, and innovations.

KAISER PERMANENTE®

In the hands of doctors.

www.kaiserpermanente.org/california

© 2000 Kaiser Permanente

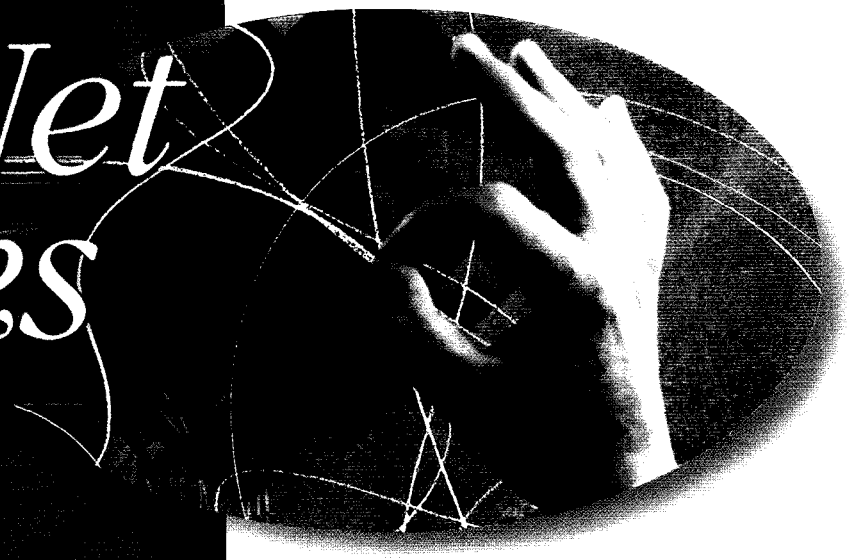
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

State Net works

success

experience

intelligence



More organizations in California are turning to State Net to better manage information, pursue opportunities and increase their resources in the state.

Our services are completely customized to deliver exactly what your government affairs program needs. Every day, California capitol coverage connects you with strategic insight and intelligence. You gain complete knowledge of where your issues stand and how lawmakers stand on your issues.

State Net gives you complete insight, complete services and complete success.

www.statenet.com

STATE NET

Experts in Legislative & Regulatory Intelligence

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

California's largest private

employer

makes things that soar.

Economies, for example.

NO OTHER MANUFACTURER EMPLOYS MORE CALIFORNIANS THAN BOEING. With over 40,000 employees and 8,000 suppliers right here, we add more than $8 billion to the state's economy annually—which helps keep the Golden State golden. Whether it's high-tech communications satellites and mobile broadband services; the International Space Station and the Space Shuttle; Sea Launch and Delta launch services; or the Boeing 717 and the C-17 military transport, our California-based programs help ensure a vibrant state economy for years to come.

www.boeing.com

BOEING®
Forever New Frontiers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

california JOURNAL

April 2001
Volume XXXII, Number 4

Upfront
Brockovich is back; Arnold is out?

Talking Points
The Scarlet Letter, the political press and wind power

The Bottom Line
Beating up on California
By Susan Rasky

Southern Exposure
The L.A. mayor's "to-do" list
By Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

D.C. Perspective
The George W. Bush school of charm
By Dana Milkie

A mighty good fellow

Over the years, *California Journal* has had the good fortune to work with many talented journalists, one being Michael Isip of KVIE-TV, the public television station in Sacramento. When Michael approached us last year with an offer to join a media partnership to give wide exposure to health care coverage, we quickly signed on. Other members included Los Angeles' *La Opinion*, the *Sacramento Bee* and the California Health Care Foundation. The result was a set of widely disseminated reports — including those of *CJ* Senior Editor Emelyn Rodriguez — examining candidates' positions on health care as well as the status of access in California. As KVIE's executive producer, Michael organized the effort. Having done the job and done it well, we now hear that Michael is under way on his next project: a one-hour documentary on mentally ill homeless people and the outreach workers who assist them. His project earned notice from the Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism, which selected Michael as one of its 2000-2001 fellows. Congrats, Michael. We can't wait to see it.

Cynthia H. Craft

Rural health care's diagnosis: critical

Isolated geographically and economically, California's rural residents are afflicted with severe shortages of doctors, hospitals and affordable care. Is there a cure?
By Emelyn Rodriguez

California's big-city mayors

They govern cities whose prowess and problems rival those of many small countries. A look at the challenges facing big-city leaders in 2001.
by Kathleen Les

Profiles of the top five:

21 San Diego's Dick Murphy by Philip J. LaVelle
22 Los Angeles' Richard Riordan by Peter Hecht
24 San Francisco's Willie Brown by Edward Epstein
25 San Jose's Ron Gonzales by Kathleen Les
27 Oakland's Jerry Brown by Cynthia H. Craft

The state's "other" big cities

A look at metropolitan up-and-comers
By A.G. Block

Electricity crisis drains the Legislature

With deregulation siphoning off huge amounts of legislative time and money, lawmakers and lobbyists are wondering: Will there be anything left?
By Noel Brinkerhoff

Armenian-Americans and political clout

Driven by memories, this tiny ethnic community wields a big political stick, as evidenced every April in U.S. House-sponsored genocide legislation.
By Michael Doyle

Living without: rural phones

A surprisingly large number of rural residents have never had local phone service. Legislation to hook them up raises the question: Who pays and how much?
By Claudia Buck

Cover design by Dagmar Thompson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

umbrage

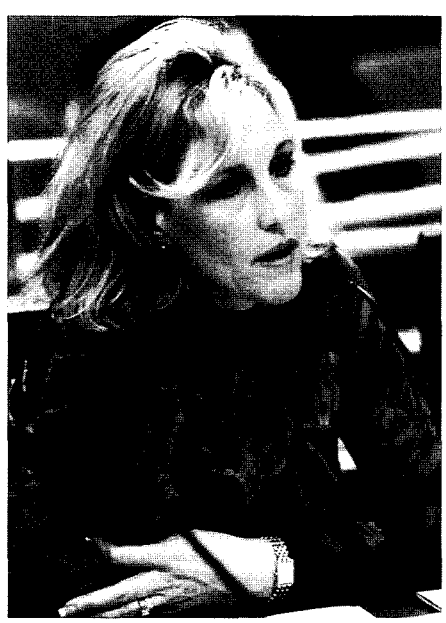
Burnt to a crisp. Looks like the energy crisis has claimed its first casualty. As a result of state Senator Hilda Solis' election to Congress last fall, two liberal Democrats — former Assemblyman Martin Gallegos and current Assemblywoman Gloria Romero — squared off in a March special election to fill the predominantly Democratic 24th Senate District. Gallegos appeared to be the favorite after he picked up the backing of the state Democratic Party, most of the legislative Latino Caucus and Governor Gray Davis. Romero, on the other hand, enjoyed the support of Solis who is popular in the district. And, yet, when all the ballots were counted, Gallegos got trounced — by nearly 30 points. One big reason: Romero's repeated attacks on Gallegos for voting for the original electricity deregulation bill, AB 1890, in 1996. Romero escaped that vote because she wasn't elected to the Legislature until 1998.

Status quo. Shawn Steel was elected chairman of the California Republican Party at the GOP state convention in late February, marking an end to one of the most hotly contested chairmanship fights in recent memory. Steel bested former Assemblyman Brooks Firestone in what had been billed as a conservative-vs.-moderate confrontation for control of the party. But rather than a triumph of the right over the center, man interpret Steel's victory as nothing more than the long-standing tradition of elevating the vice chairman. Both candidates had promised to professionalize party operations — an imperative if the GOP is to begin the long road to recovery in California (see *CJ*, February 2001). That process began when party veteran John Peschong was given the task of handling the party's day-to-day operations — at the insistence of the man many consider to be the *real* chairman of the state Republican Party, President George W. Bush. As a result, those familiar with internal party machinations downplay Steel's role, suggesting that the chairman is merely a figurehead. Real party power, insiders insist, rests with the GOP's dwindling cadre of legislators and members of Congress. Steel, an attorney from Rolling Hills, succeeds John McGraw of Orange County and will serve two years.

Say, who? Someone ought to update Pacific Bell's telephone listings. When you call

Fighting scum and mildew.

It's being called the "asbestos of this decade" by some health advocates: mold. Increasingly, homeowners and renters are battling developers and landlords over toxic mold in households that leads to chronic and severe health problems. Currently, no mold standards exist in California law — or anywhere else, for that matter — for residential dwellings or businesses. But last month Democratic Senator Deborah Ortiz of Sacramento launched a campaign to change that. And to make sure her grime-fighting effort cleaned up on publicity, Ortiz enlisted the help of none other than Erin Brockovich, the buxom blonde crusader made famous by Hollywood for her battle with PG&E over chromium-tainted water. Almost a half-dozen camera crews were on hand to cover Ortiz's orchestrated event, so the Brockovich hook worked — unless you count the fact that all the TV folks packed up their tripods once Brockovich finished talking. The savior of Hinkley, California, however, wasn't on hand merely to adopt a new cause. Rather, Brockovich and her family have had their own personal ordeal with mold and its associated illnesses, including swollen ears, respiratory trouble and chronic fatigue. Like her legendary tussle with PG&E, Brockovich is headed back to the courtroom — this time against the developer of her home, who has refused to fix the faulty floors and windows causing the toxic mold problem. It's too early to tell whether this latest Erin crusade will be enticing enough for the big screen, or instead get bumped down to the NBC Sunday Night Movie, sponsored by Tilex.



Erin Brockovich

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

california JOURNAL a State Net publication

Editor: Cynthia H. Craft

Managing Editor: Claudia Buck

Senior Editor: Emelyn Rodriguez

Associate Editors: Noel Brinkerhoff, Kathleen Les, Melanie Smith

Contributing Editors: Lou Cannon, Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, Susan Rasky, Marc Sandalow, Dana Wilkie

Art Director: Dagmar Thompson

Art Staff: Suzanne Raney

Advertising Coordinator: Erica Pahl (916) 444-2840

Circulation: *Tim Foster*

Editor-in-Chief, State Net: A.G. Block
Founding Publisher: Thomas R. Hoeber

STATE NET

Services & Publications

50-state and congressional on-line legislative and regulatory reporting • Single-state on-line legislative and regulatory reporting for CA, CO, IL, MI, MA, OH, and PA • State Net Capitol Journal • California Directories • California Journal • California Political Almanac • California Journal On-line • 50-state legislative Directory • Books & Seminars

For more information call: (916) 444-0840
www.statenet.com

CALIFORNIA JOURNAL is a monthly, non-partisan, non-ideological analysis of California government and politics established in 1970. The Journal is available on-line through StateNet, Nexis/Lexis and Westlaw. It is indexed in Public Affairs Information Service, New York Times Information Bank, Sage Urban Studies Abstracts and Urban Affairs Abstracts. California Journal (ISSN 0008-1205) is published monthly. Subscription rates: Libraries and Government Agencies, $59.00; Corporations and Associations, $95.00; Special Individual rate, $42.00. Address all inquiries to California Journal, 2101 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95816. Telephone (916) 444-2840. Copyright 1998 by Information for Public Affairs, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Sacramento. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CALIFORNIA JOURNAL, 2101 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95816.

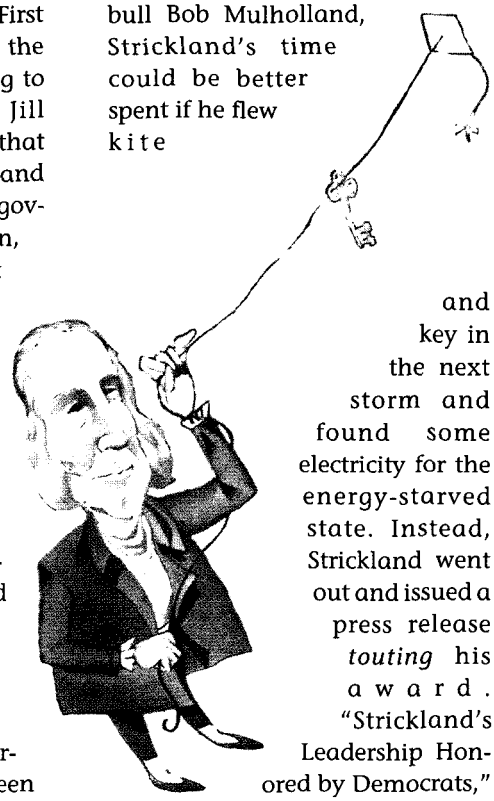
directory assistance in Santa Barbara and ask for a number for Brooks Firestone, you're given the number for Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson's district office. Firestone left that seat, AD35, in 1998.

Hasta la Vista, maybe. So Arnold "The Vacillator" Schwarzenegger is absolutely, positively thinking about the possibility of considering his options to mull over his uncertainties. Huh? Either that or Ahnuld needs to hire a new publicist. First we heard on March 7 that the timing wasn't right, according to Schwarzenegger publicist Jill Eisenstadt, who announced that her boss had too many film and family obligations to run for governor starting next year. Then, on March 8, Eisenstadt went into high-speed backpedal, saying the actor's mind wasn't made up. "He doesn't want anyone drawing conclusions he is running. He doesn't want anyone to draw the conclusion he is not running," Eisenstadt told the *Los Angeles Times*, before her spinometer overheated and began to smoke.

Now, children, play nice. Meanwhile, the GOP's dark horse for governor, William Simon Jr., has been the subject of a classic fax-war between Simon's campaign consultant, Sal Russo, and Gray Davis' top adviser, Garry South. After faxing info to Capitol reporters about Simon's involvement in a failed savings and loan and his sporadic voting history, South leveled this broadside at Russo: "Sal, ol' buddy, one of the basic rules of campaign politics: Vet your candidate before you start flacking for him!" Russo, however, hasn't been above facsimiling his own *neener-neener-neener* on Davis' energy troubles: "Sorry, Garry, your boss has a monopoly on the secrecy market (and electricity, too!)."

umbrage

Go fly a kite. Republican Assemblyman Tony Strickland *rarely misses a chance to bash* Democrats or to toot his own horn. Recently the Thousand Oaks conservative managed to do both after Democrats bestowed him with a dubious honor. For his best-supporting role in knocking Governor Gray Davis' energy plan, Strickland was presented with the first-ever Ben Franklin Award — namely a kite and a key — from the California Democratic Party. According to Democratic Party pit bull Bob Mulholland, Strickland's time could be better spent if he flew kite



and key in the next storm and found some electricity for the energy-starved state. Instead, Strickland went out and issued a press release *touting* his award. "Strickland's Leadership Honored by Democrats," read the headline. Now, we haven't decided whether Strickland should be honored for this cocky bit of scripted spin — maybe the first-ever *Cal Journal* Chutzpah trophy is in order. We'd love to see the release Strickland puts out for *that* honor.

"You can read more about politics in a campaign biography, but one week that is six months spent with a psychoanalyst."

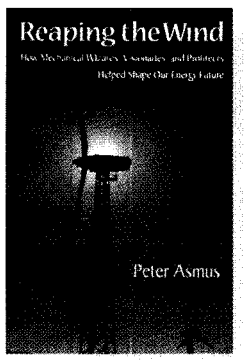
— Adlai Stevenson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Excerpts:

From the Bookshelf

"Reaping the Wind: How Mechanical Wizards, Visionaries, and Profiteers Helped Shape Our Energy Future"
by Peter Asmus
Island Press, $25



With all the static about California's energy troubles, it's only fitting that a book comes along to stir up some electricity over an often overlooked form of power generation: wind.

Wind power today, writes Peter Asmus, a Northern California-based writer and *California Journal* contributor, represents "the fastest growing source of electricity in the world." It's also an industry with a rich, complex history of players — both dreamers and capitalists — whom Asmus chronicles in explaining the rise and fall (and recent Phoenix-like rebirth) of this alternative energy source.

For readers interested in California history, the Golden State takes center stage. In particular, the Altamont Pass has played a critical role in the topsy-turvy development of wind farms. It was there, among the blustery hills overlooking Highway 580 in eastern Contra Costa County, that the world's largest collection of wind turbines, 6,000 in all, sprang up following the Great California Wind Rush of the 1980s, and where, later, a bankrupt U.S. Windpower company nearly toppled the fledgling industry.

Tech Watch:

The Scarlet Letter

Ever since Florida's bungled balloting, vendors of high-tech election gadgetry have been vigorously hawking their wares to state and county election officials around the country.

Here in California, a recent voting technology expo hosted by the Secretary of State's Office was filled with all sorts of voice-activated, computer-enhanced voting systems.

But amid all the bells and whistles, there was one lonely vendor whose product was decidedly low on the tech-barometer. The product was a voter I.D. system designed to deter fraud in states that allow same-day voter registration.

California currently doesn't allow same-day registration but advocates see it as a way to boost turnout on Election Day, making it simple for last-minute voters to walk in, register to vote and immediately cast their ballots. But one of the drawbacks is that someone intent on voter mischief could easily walk into multiple precincts and vote repeatedly on Election Day.

What to do? Simple, according to Identicator, a Marina del Rey company that sells fingerprinting products to law enforcement, government and voting officials worldwide. Its answer sat in a little plastic jar containing a purplish-pink sponge with a hole in the middle. Newly minted voters simply dip their finger into the jar, emerging with an unmistakably marked digit.

"It's like the scarlet letter. You can't go anywhere else and vote again," said a company spokeswoman. Already used in several Central American countries, the "exclusive formula" can't be washed, rubbed or bleached off for at least 24 hours. Kind of gives a whole new meaning to pinkies.

Quotables.....

"For me as a human being, it is not important. A piece of paper is not my life. My mind doesn't work that way."

— Jacques Barzaghi, longtime adviser to Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, on why outside income for feng shui consulting didn't appear on his 1999 economic interest statement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

News Media:

Applauding excellence

In the jungles of journalism, political reporting has long been on the endangered species list. Most California TV stations years ago abandoned their Capitol news bureaus and even well-established newspapers have shrunk the number of column inches devoted to political coverage.

For journalists who toil in the political trenches, covering the Capitol and state government is neither easy nor widely appreciated. It requires taking complex issues and distilling them down to understandable stories. It's dissecting a budget, uncovering a cover-up, tracking the sources of campaign contributions. Ultimately, it's about making government accountable to the people it represents.

That's why it's worth noting the annual California Journalism Awards, sponsored by the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento, which reward excellence in political coverage by print, radio and TV reporters statewide each year.

For 2000 the winners are:

Print (Special Feature/Enterprise Reporting): *Sacramento Bee* columnist Daniel Weintraub, formerly with the *Orange County Register*, for a series tracking a beverage-recycling bill through the Legislature, which one judge called "the best example of how the Capitol really works that I've ever seen." **Print (Daily Coverage):** Jim Sweeney, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, for "dogged coverage" of Indian gaming issues.

Radio (Special Feature/Enterprise Reporting): Ellen Ciurczak, *The California Report*, KQED, San Francisco, for various special reports on negative campaign tactics, the Proposition 36 campaign, and the state Senate's task force on homelessness; **Radio (Daily Coverage):** Aaron Glantz, KPFA, Berkeley, on campaign reform, CYA abuses and Governor Gray Davis' dealings with timber representatives.

Television (Special Feature/Enterprise Reporting): Randy Paige, KCBS, Los Angeles, for a two-part series on lead paint discoveries in schools; **Television (Daily Coverage):** Kevin Riggs, KCRA, Sacramento, for ongoing coverage of the scandal involving former Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush.

Compiled by California Journal Editors

By the numbers

California's top political donors*

$1.3 million: Amount given by David Gilo (D), chairman of Vyyo Inc., a communications firm in Cupertino.

$1.25 million: Amount from Haim Saban (D), CEO of Fox Family Worldwide Inc. of Los Angeles.

$759,000: Amount given by Stephen L. Bing (D), screenwriter and producer in Los Angeles.

$727,000: Amount given by David J. Shimmon (D), president of Kinetics Group Inc., a high-tech firm in Los Altos Hills.

$664,148: Amount given by Walter H. Shorenstein (D), of The Shorenstein Co., a finance firm in San Francisco.

$655,000: Amount given by Steven T. Kirsch (D) (with wife, Michele), founder of Infoseek, a high-tech firm in Los Altos Hills.

$617,500: Amount from Kenneth A. Eldred (R) (with wife, Roberta), founder of Ariba Inc., a finance firm in Portola Valley.

* To federal candidates, parties and PACs from January 1999 to February 2001
Source: Federal Elections Commission records, tallied and reported by Mother Jones magazine

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rural Health Care: Is there a doctor in the house?

One late March evening, a team of Orange County doctors, nurses and anesthesiologists hopped aboard a borrowed private jet and headed on a medical "mercy mission." It was the second time in four months that the medical team donated its time and expertise to treat poor children in underserved areas. Some of the young patients had waited almost two years for vital ear, nose or throat surgery.

The destination wasn't some far-flung village in Mexico or El Salvador, but a clinic in Redding, California, the largest city in Shasta County, that draws patients from the community, neighboring cities and rural outposts as far north as the Oregon border 117 miles away.

Isolated by their geography as well as their economy, California's rural residents have been hit hard by hospital closures and HMO departures. Perhaps the most visible problem is that there just aren't enough medical professionals — from doctors to clinic workers — to go around.

By Emelyn Rodriguez

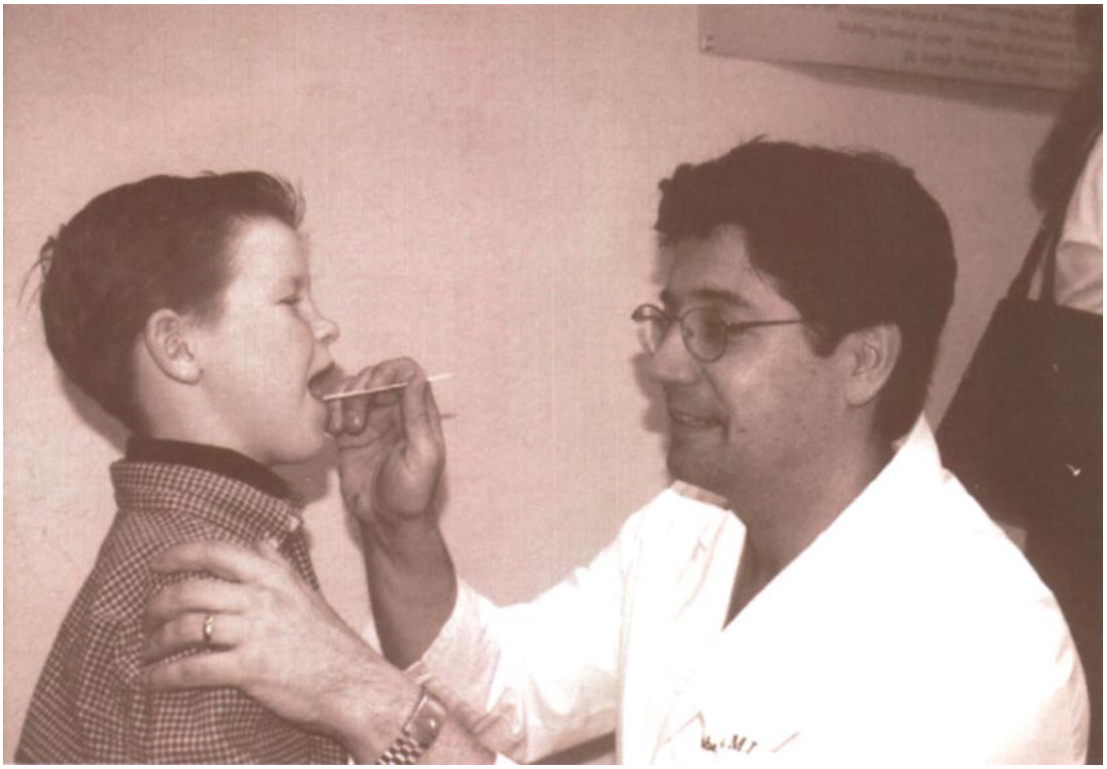
Dr. Robert del Junco, an Orange County physician who organized the trip, joined colleagues in devoting several marathon days to removing tonsils, treating infected sinuses and inserting ear tubes. Although the conditions were not life-threatening, if left untreated, they could lead to serious or permanent health problems. All of the children were covered by Medicaid (known in California as Medi-Cal, a federal and state insurance program for the poor), but many were on lengthy waiting lists due to a severe shortage of otolaryngologists, commonly known as ear, nose and throat doctors.

"It's a Band-Aid approach right now," said del Junco, adding that the mission highlights a statewide problem especially acute in rural areas but falls short of providing a long-term solution. "Maybe I'm putting a Band-Aid on a hole that can't be fixed. But I felt I had to do something," he said.

The mercy mission illustrates some of the most pressing health issues facing rural California. Among them: serious shortages of medical professionals — specialists, primary care doctors, nurses and other health care workers — and low governmental reimbursement rates that remain well below the cost of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Donating his time on a medical "mercy mission," Dr. Robert del Junco examines a young patient's throat at a Redding clinic where some have waited two years for surgery.

"Rural populati
or hospi
that it requir
c
needed had th
— Stephen Le

care. Other problems include: hospital closures and bankruptcies, scant emergency services and health maintenance organizations that are not only reluctant to expand coverage in sparsely populated areas but are, in many instances, pulling out.

"It's a very dire situation," said Assemblyman Sam Aanestad (R-Grass Valley), an oral surgeon who represents seven northeastern counties considered rural or frontier (extremely isolated) areas. "It's critical. That's not to say that the problem doesn't exist across the state, but there are certain, special problems with the delivery of health care in rural California...The access question is critical. Financing is critical. The number of providers is critical."

Communities big and small, rural and urban, are faced with financially troubled hospitals struggling to stay open and with difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified medical personnel.

However, it is in rural California where many of the most serious problems plaguing the state's health care system converge — magnified and intensified by remote locations, scattered populations and meager resources.

Rural difficulties

Rural California is home to one in six of the state's residents (17 percent of the statewide population) and covers more than 75 percent of its geography. All but three of the Golden State's counties have rural areas within their boundaries, and 29 of California's 58 counties are considered entirely rural, according to the Rural Health Policy Council's 1998 annual report to the Legislature.

These are among the most difficult places to deliver medical services, due in part to their geographically far-flung and isolated locations and their economically depressed communities.

Residents of small, far-off communities tend to be older, poorer and often sicker than the state's general population. They have higher unemployment, lower incomes and less health care coverage. They also tend to have larger numbers of people on public health insurance such as Medicare and Medicaid. This means that rural health providers rely more on revenues from these programs than their urban colleagues and are more susceptible to the ups and downs resulting from changes in public policy.

Studies suggest there is a big disparity between urban and rural residents' health status, said Stephen Lewis, executive director of the California State Rural Health Association, a nonprofit, nonpartisan grass-roots organization that works to improve the well-being of rural Californians.

"Rural populations have a tendency not to go to a doctor or hospital until their illness gets so bad that it requires more extensive or expensive care than they would have needed had they gone sooner," Lewis said. "The lower education levels, the sicker condition of many residents and the higher acuity of care needed by these populations collide head-on with lack of services in rural areas... So the big result is that the general health of rural residents is significantly lower than that of the urban population, and there is evidence that the gap is widening."

Perhaps among the poorest of rural residents are the state's 700,000 farm workers, whose seasonal employment, lack of medical insurance and meager financial resources often negatively affect their personal health, said state Senator Deborah Ortiz (D-Sacramento), who sits on a newly formed task force on farm worker health created by The California Endowment. The endowment, launched in 1996 as a result of Blue Cross of California's conversion to a for-profit corporation, is the state's largest health care foundation.

"There is a crisis in rural health in general and it is an even greater crisis for farm workers and migrant workers," Ortiz said. According to a November 2000 study conducted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ave a tendency not to go to a doctor
il their illness gets so bad
ore extensive or expensive
an they would have
ne sooner."

fornia State Rural Health Association

by the California Institute for Rural Studies, a private, nonprofit research group, nearly 70 percent of farm workers (randomly surveyed) lacked health insurance and only 7 percent were covered by government-funded programs for low-income persons. Only 16.5 percent of workers were offered health insurance by their employers and a third of those declined coverage because they either could not afford the health insurance premiums or the required co-pay for treatments. In addition, many workers were at higher risk for chronic diseases due to high cholesterol, high blood pressure and obesity. Many had never visited a doctor, dentist or a health clinic.

"It is a tragedy and more than a little ironic that the labor force that is responsible for producing such a great abundance of health food in California should themselves be suffering from the effects of inadequate diet," the report said.

Barriers to health care

However, even rural residents with health insurance and financial resources are finding barriers to health care. Many of California's small and rural hospitals are facing closures and bankruptcies, further reducing the number of places where people in remote areas can seek medical and emergency care. Six rural hospitals — in Stanislaus, Merced, Kings, Tulare, Imperial and Los Angeles counties — have closed in the last four years and many more have filed for bankruptcy or are teetering on the edge of insolvency. More than 75 percent of hospitals that serve the state's rural areas lose money compared with 64 percent of all hospitals statewide.

These hospitals are important not only because they provide necessary health services to the state's 2.6 million rural residents and tourists, but also because they are vital to local and state economies. California's 71 rural hospitals and other providers contributed $400 million to the California economy in 1998. They are also the main source of health care for employees in the $17 billion agriculture, fishing, mining and forestry industries, according to the California Healthcare Association.

"The hospital tends to be the No. 1 employer in a small community in terms of numbers of people that it employs — and it's an attraction for business development and to keep the community there," said Sharon Avery, executive director of the California Healthcare Association's Rural Healthcare Center. "So when a hospital is in trouble and it looks like it may fold, it affects access to health care and it also affects the health of the whole community in terms of economics."

Other states, faced with similar problems, have employed creative strategies to bolster struggling rural hospitals. For instance, Texas took a huge chunk of its tobacco settlement ($50 million) and put it in a fund for rural hospitals. Oregon, which reimburses hospitals at-cost for Medicaid care, is considering creating a grant to help rural providers replace aging equipment and provide support for "safety net" clinics. New York created a program that provides up to $10 million a year for up to three years to

Just what the doctor ordered: 2001 bills on rural health care

AB548, by Assemblyman George Runner (R-Lancaster) and Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin (D-Duncan Mills) and sponsored by the California Medical Association, would establish a specialty care program for low-income people in medically underserved areas. Under the plan, the state Department of Health Services would maintain a registry to match medical specialists willing to donate their services with low-income patients needing care.

SB317, by Senator Deborah Ortiz (D-Sacramento), would expand nursing programs run by the California State University and California Community Colleges systems. The bill adds $30 million to the programs in the first year and more in later years. It would provide enough money to pay for the training of 4,000 additional nursing students a year. It would also allow nursing students who work in underserved areas to apply for loans and scholarships.

SB277, by Senator Wes Chesbro (D-Arcata), would provide a subsidy or reimbursement for health care premiums to assist California State University employees who live in rural areas with no access to HMO coverage.

AB883, by Assemblyman Dean Florez (D-Shafter), would establish the Farmworker Health Trust Fund, which would accept contributions from agricultural organizations and other sources, and would collect matching funds from the state's general fund. The money would be allocated to clinics that provide outpatient health, dental and mental health care to farm workers and other hard-to-serve populations in rural areas.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Assemblyman Sam Aanestad

State Senator Deborah Ortiz

"It's a very dire situation..... That's not to say that the problem doesn't exist across the state, but there are certain, special problems with the delivery of health care in rural California."
— Assemblyman Sam Aanestad

help rural hospitals pay for infrastructure needs.

Health experts trace many of the budgetary problems facing hospitals to changes in the Medicare program in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. The budget act, which in many cases reduced payment for services, imposed on hospitals $60 billion in Medicare payment cuts over five years. The changes hit rural health providers hardest because they serve a higher percentage of patients on Medicare and Medicaid. Although subsequent federal budgets reduced or slowed some of the cuts, many hospitals and providers continue to struggle financially.

"It threw many, many hospitals into a tailspin, including many large hospitals," said Raymond Hino, chief executive officer of Tehachapi Hospital in southern Kern County, which serves a mountain community of about 20,000. "The majority of hospitals are struggling today because of these changes."

In order to rake in additional revenue to stay afloat, Tehachapi Hospital officials recently applied for designation as a "critical access hospital" under a federal program that would increase reimbursement rates for Medicare services and would restore an estimated $400,000 in cuts. The status is reserved for the smallest and most remote hospitals meeting certain strict criteria. In order to qualify, hospitals must have no more than 15 acute care beds, must be at least 35 miles from other hospitals and must have a 24-hour emergency room.

"We're hoping that the critical access program will save us," said Hino. "I doubt we would survive without additional reimbursement."

Life without HMOs

The cuts in governmental reimbursement rates have also had other devastating effects. Reduced Medicare rates have prompted managed care companies to pull out of many rural areas, leaving residents without an HMO option.

When the computer makes house calls

In places where patients can't meet doctors face-to-face, telemedicine brings them together for "virtual visits."

By Emelyn Rodriguez

Telemedicine is increasingly being used in rural areas to expand access to medical specialists and to save costs. The use of interactive video consultations to diagnose and treat patients has helped resolve some of the disparities between rural and urban health care, said Priscilla Enriquez, co-director of the California Telehealth and Telemedicine Center.

"It has made specialty care more available to people who live in remote, medically underserved communities," Enriquez said. Ordinarily, these patients would have to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Families USA, a national, nonpartisan consumer advocacy group, estimated that 78 percent of rural residents in California have no access to a Medicare HMO. At least 23 of California's 58 counties offer no HMO coverage for seniors, a plan that includes coverage for prescription drugs. Seniors without medicare coverage through HMOs must pay retail prices for medications.

"HMOs are virtually nonexistent for California residents living in rural areas," said state Senator Jackie Speier (D-Hillsborough), who held a hearing last year to gather information on the problem.

Other states, such as Washington, Oklahoma and New Mexico, are far more inclusive, mandating an "all-or-nothing" approach that requires HMOs to provide equal coverage in urban and rural areas, Speier said. "In California, we allow HMOs to cherry-pick," she said. "It's redlining in a way. We don't allow it in banking or the financial industry, yet we tolerate it when it comes to health care."

Bobby Pena, spokesman for the California Association of Health Plans, said that low Medicare reimbursement rates, a limited pool of enrollees, difficulty recruiting providers and a lack of competition among hospitals and medical groups in rural areas keep many HMOs from being profitable or even feasible in rural areas.

"In smaller communities, if there are only one or two hospitals, [HMOs] end up paying higher prices to providers because of lack of competition," Pena said. "They set rates so high that they've driven the HMO product out of the market."

Despite the crisis in rural health care, lawmakers and health experts say that comprehensive legislative fixes are hard to come by. Part of the problem, they say, is that the issues are so varied and complex. A broad brush approach does not work well in rural communities because most have their own distinct challenges. The other problem, they say, is political.

"Between the deserts and mountains and the farm lands we have a pretty rural state. But politically, you'd never know it," said one rural health advocate who asked not to be identified. "It's out of sight, out of mind...Just think about the votes. You can get all the rural votes in the state and you can still lose by a landslide. So who are you going to pay attention to?"

State Senator Wes Chesbro (D-Arcata) believes that the primary obstacle is a general lack of knowledge and, in some cases, interest in rural issues. "State government... doesn't really reflect an understanding of not just health care, but of rural problems [in general] because rural residents are a minority of the population. So it's a real challenge."

But even lawmakers who care deeply about the problem admit that there are no easy solutions.

"I do think that a legislative fix is difficult in some respects," Speier said. "It's unlikely to use a stick in California to get the result you want. Incentives may provide better results."

For instance, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to mandate HMO coverage in underserved areas because the travel long distances to urban centers and endure lengthy waits to see specialists. "From an economic standpoint, it saves money in terms of travel and time off from work," she added.

Patients usually have their consultations at a rural clinic or hospital that is electronically linked to a medical expert. Using specialized equipment that includes a high-resolution camera, the physician is able to conduct a "virtual visit" with patients.

In some communities, telemedicine is used in schools that can no longer afford full-time school nurses, in homes of elderly homebound patients and others with mobility problems and in correctional facilities that lack on-site physicians.

In some cases, telemedicine can hold down health care costs, by decreasing emergency room use and hospital admissions.

"If I'm at home and I'm elderly and I'm scared because I'm not feeling well, I can call up my nurse," said Sharon Avery, executive director of the Rural Health Care Center. A nurse or doctor can see and talk to the patient through a video monitor and determine whether a trip to the emergency room is really necessary, she said.

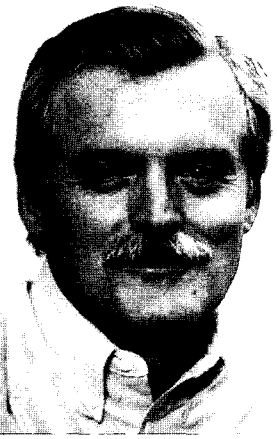
Dr. Tom Nesbitt, UC Davis telemedicine program

The most frequently requested specialties include dermatology, pediatric care and mental health services, said Dr. Tom Nesbitt, director of the University of California, Davis, telemedicine program, which provides consultations in 20 different medical disciplines from cardiology to psychiatry. Funded by federal and state monies and private foundation grants, the UC Davis program provides care to patients at 20 to 30 sites per month. Since the program began in 1996, UC Davis specialists have provided more than 2,000 telemedicine consultations with patients statewide.

Although promising, telemedicine does have its limitations. It doesn't take the place of physicians; it simply augments what they do, Nesbitt said.

"It's not going to completely replace face-to-face specialty care," he added. "It's limited to picture and sound. It won't take the place of a specialist manipulating a broken bone or a surgeon feeling someone's abdomen."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



State Senator Wes Chesbro

"State government...doesn't really reflect an understanding of not just health care but of rural problems [in general] because rural residents are a minority of the population."
— State Senator Wes Chesbro

state has already allowed HMOs to operate without those requirements, Speier said. "So it's a take-back and it's more difficult to accomplish," she added. "Perhaps if we were starting from scratch it would be something we could do."

Instead, lawmakers have focused on bite-sized solutions, such as laws requiring the state to increase allocations for public insurance programs or requiring HMOS to speed up payments to health providers. Legislators also have expanded such existing state programs as Healthy Families, a low-income insurance program, and the Song-Brown Family Physician Training Act, which trains and recruits family physicians in medically underserved areas.

In the past year, legislators have obtained funding increases for the state's network of rural clinics and other safety net providers, as well as secured long overdue increases in the Medi-Cal physician reimbursement rate. However, there remains "a significant gap" between the Medi-Cal rate and rates paid under Medicare and other health programs, according to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office. Lawmakers are asking for further increases this year.

Yet it is clear that much work remains to ward off an even bleaker situation. The Capitol "is abuzz with the energy crisis, but there are other problems in California," said Aanestad. "We need to come up with some solutions before we have the kind of crisis in health care that we have in energy. There are things we can do to prevent that. We just have to have the political will [in the Capitol] to do that."

Emelyn Rodriguez is senior editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

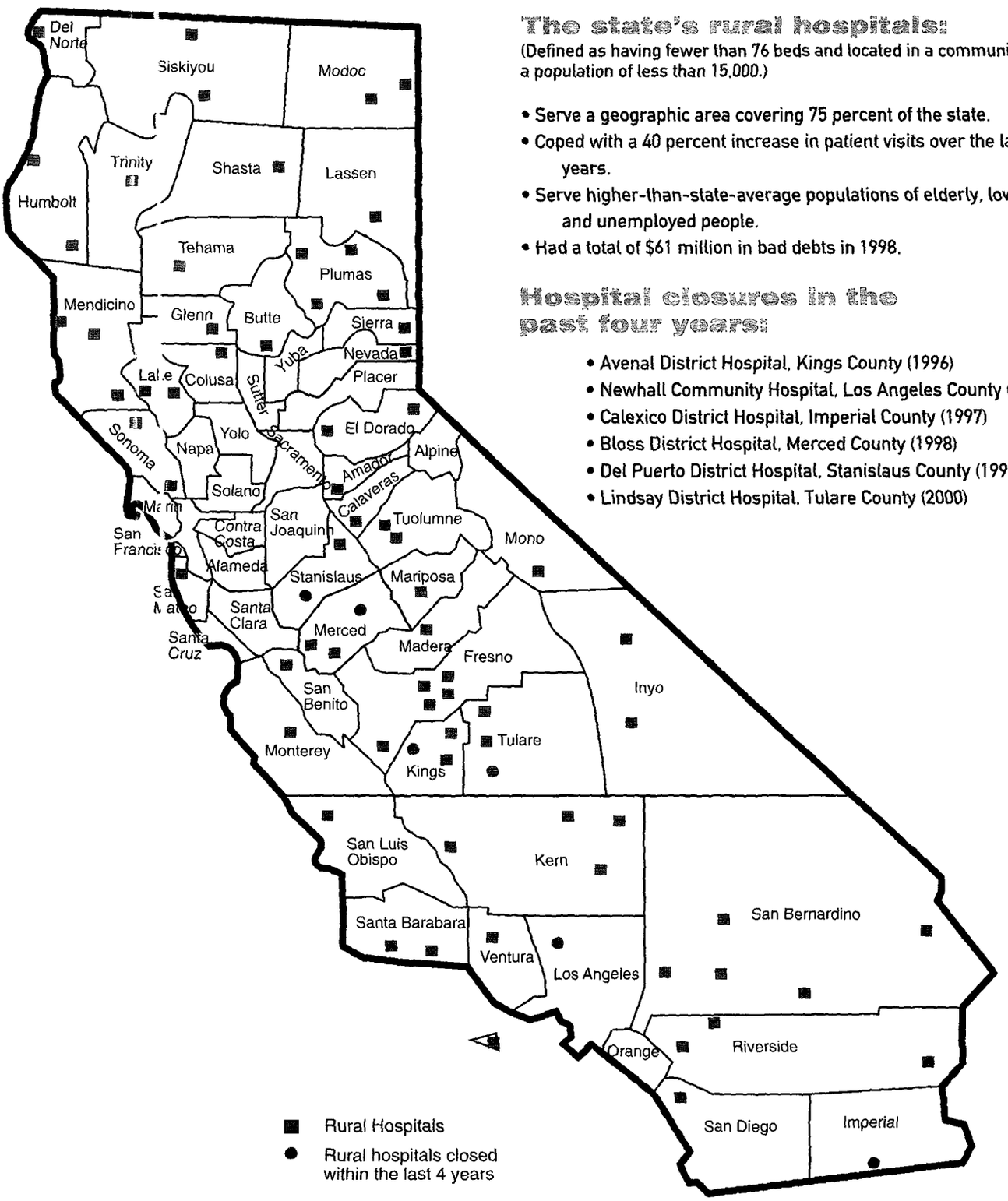
Online Resources:

- **California Healthcare Association:** www.calhealth.org
- **California Institute for Rural Studies:**www.cirsinc.org
- **California Primary Care Association:**www.cpca.org
- **California Rural Health Policy Council:** www.ruralhealth.ca.gov
- **California State Rural Health Association:** www.csrha.org
- **California Telehealth & Telemedicine Center:** www.cttconline.org
- **National Rural Health Association:** www.nrharural.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The challenge for California's rural hospitals

California's rural hospitals cover a lot of ground, serving a population of more than 2.6 million residents. In the past four years, as financial pressures mounted, the number of rural hospitals has dropped from 77 to 71.



The state's rural hospitals:

(Defined as having fewer than 76 beds and located in a community with a population of less than 15,000.)

- Serve a geographic area covering 75 percent of the state.
- Coped with a 40 percent increase in patient visits over the last five years.
- Serve higher-than-state-average populations of elderly, low-income and unemployed people.
- Had a total of $61 million in bad debts in 1998.

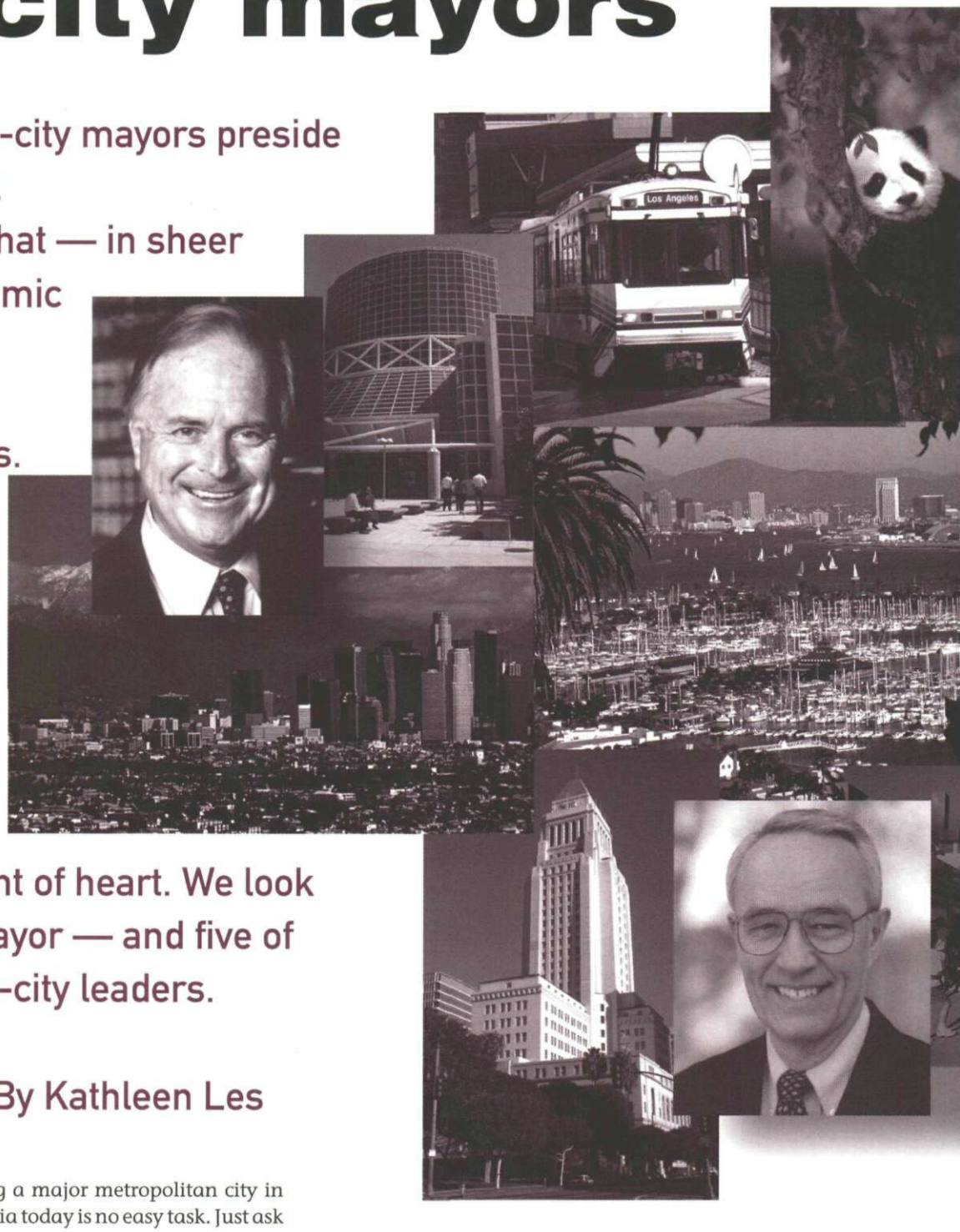
Hospital closures in the past four years:

- Avenal District Hospital, Kings County (1996)
- Newhall Community Hospital, Los Angeles County (1997)
- Calexico District Hospital, Imperial County (1997)
- Bloss District Hospital, Merced County (1998)
- Del Puerto District Hospital, Stanislaus County (1998)
- Lindsay District Hospital, Tulare County (2000)

Source: California Healthcare Association

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Big-city mayors



California's big-city mayors preside over municipal governments that — in sheer size and economic output — rival those of many small countries. But leading these wealthy mini-nations — many weighed down by blight and crime — isn't for the faint of heart. We look at the job of mayor — and five of California's big-city leaders.

By Kathleen Les

Governing a major metropolitan city in California today is no easy task. Just ask San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown. For 15 years, Willie Brown ruled California's state Assembly, waging and winning fierce political battles with strong Republican governors. He raised millions to help elect fellow Democrats and reigned over policy decisions for a nation-state.

So how tough could it be to take the helm as mayor in his hometown of San Francisco, the little city by the bay? Pretty tough, it turns out. Even with his legendary panache and bravado, governing a city has proven no simple chore for Brown.

From getting the city buses rolling on time to patching the potholes, life on the municipal front lines, Brown has learned, offers little of the arm's-length distance from demanding constituents that he enjoyed in his legislative career.

"People perceive it's the mayor that runs the city," said Paul Lewis, a local government analyst with the Public Policy Institute of California. Even in cities with strong city managers, it is the mayor who is held most accountable.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

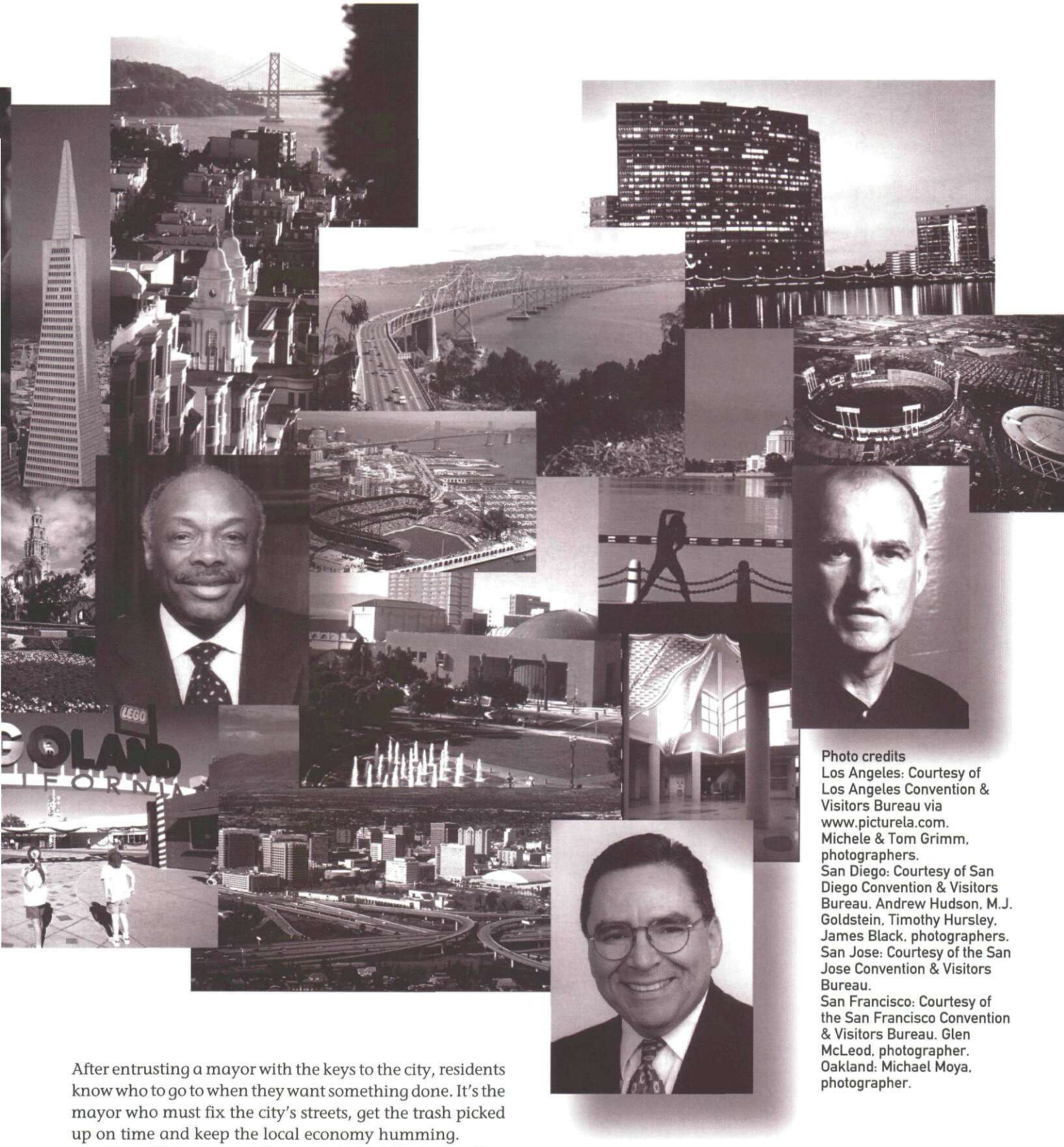


Photo credits
Los Angeles: Courtesy of Los Angeles Convention & Visitors Bureau via www.picturela.com. Michele & Tom Grimm, photographers.
San Diego: Courtesy of San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau. Andrew Hudson, M.J. Goldstein, Timothy Hursley, James Black, photographers.
San Jose: Courtesy of the San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau.
San Francisco: Courtesy of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. Glen McLeod, photographer.
Oakland: Michael Moya, photographer.

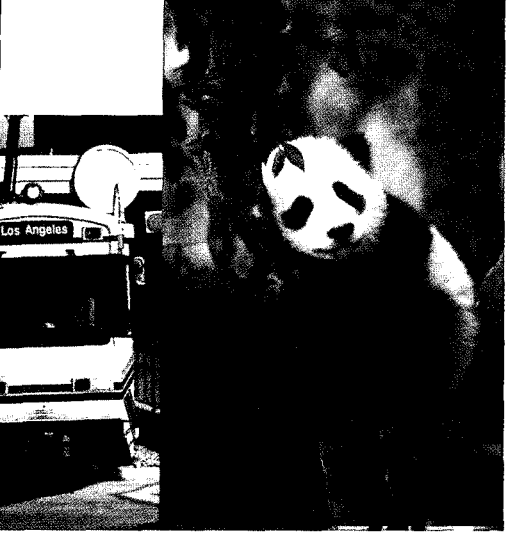
After entrusting a mayor with the keys to the city, residents know who to go to when they want something done. It's the mayor who must fix the city's streets, get the trash picked up on time and keep the local economy humming.

"Everything stops at the mayor's desk," said San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales. "This is a position that people hold responsible for the good things and the bad. Everything flows to the mayor's office."

Gonzales has the rare distinction of having served as mayor of two different cities. In the 1980s he officiated over Sunnyvale, a town one-tenth the size of San Jose. The difference in running a big city, he says, is the intensity and the push needed to get things done. "The spotlight is brighter and hotter, everything is bigger," he said. "More people are impacted, more money is involved and more partners must be brought to the table on every issue."

Despite the challenges at hand for California big-city mayors, the opportunity to wear the mantle of mayor still attracts plenty of aspirants, including those who've stepped

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



down from higher office. The current roster includes not only a past Assembly speaker, but an ex-governor, two former business executives and a judge. Willie Brown sought the mayor's job after term limits put an end to his Assembly career. Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown aimed to resurrect his flagging political image with a stab at running one of the state's most blighted and economically depressed cities. Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and Gonzales put aside lucrative careers in the private sector for a chance to apply their business acumen to two of the state's largest municipal bureaucracies.

As they have each learned in their own way, governing a large metropolis is no lark. More people live in each of the cities of Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose than reside in the entire states of Virginia, Vermont or Wyoming. The annual economic output of San Diego is greater than Ireland or Egypt. When the economic productivity of Los Angeles is measured (encompassing the entire metro area including Long Beach), it ranks as the 17th largest economy in the world, ahead of Sweden, Denmark or South Africa.

One hundred or even 50 years ago, big-city mayors presided over burgeoning metropolises bursting with optimism and room to spread out. Chambers of commerce and big business called the shots. Cronyism was the preferred style of doing business. Mayors often brokered backroom deals to help the growth machine turn former fields into city streets lined with stately buildings designed by prominent architects.

Today, these big cities have a different course to chart. Cities no longer rise from the ground up. In the 21st century, the challenge is more formidable. It involves rebuilding after years of urban decay and economic decline have chipped away at city cores. Dispersed power has taken over where the good ol' boy system once reigned.

Coalition-building the new hallmark

In this day and age, successful mayors are consensus builders by necessity. They must maneuver among neighborhood associations, advocates for the poor and small business owners — each with separate, and often competing, agendas. Coalition-building can make or break a mayor. Oakland's Jerry Brown won his election in a field of 10 candidates by threading together the concerns of affluent whites and working-class blacks. In Los Angeles, Riordan carved out his victory by successfully bridging the business and Latino communities. Riordan's successor in this year's mayoral race will be defined by his or her ability to piece together a patchwork of supporters made up of neighborhood advocates, labor and business interests.

"It's a lot trickier political problem these days," said PPIC's Lewis. "A successful mayor has to be able to navigate among [these groups] without capitulating to any of them."

Unlike their smaller suburban counterparts, big-city mayors are held directly responsible for their local economy. Often it is the larger, older cities like Los Angeles and Oakland that need the economic boost to overcome the poverty and blight that tarnish their images and foster social tensions. It falls to the mayor, said Chris McKenzie of the League of California Cities, to find the economic fix. "In large dominant cities, it's not just political leadership, but economic leadership" that mayors are judged by, McKenzie said.

Less power than perceived

But the power to reinvigorate the local economy stems more from a mayor's personal style than from powers bestowed by the city charter. Mayor Willie Brown has veto authority over the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, but he can be overridden. In San Jose, the mayor's office draws up a proposed budget, but it still takes a majority of council members to pass it. Even in large cities where mayors are given the power to hire and fire top administrators, getting the bureaucracy to change can be testy and slow. Mayors Jerry Brown and Richard Riordan both fought for charter changes so they could exert stronger control over city affairs. Once entrusted with new authority, however, these mayors must deal with voters' expectations of instant improvements.

Mayors must be visionary, but citizens still expect results-oriented governing. If not expected to pull the rabbit out of the hat, mayors must demonstrate concrete strides on their policy promises. Citizens are impatient. Progress must be real and measurable.

All big cities had their glory days in another era when commerce was anchored downtown and workers lived just a short bus ride or walk away in neighborhoods that fanned out from the hub of the central business district. In recent decades, mayors and local officials tried returning cities to their former prominence with one-shot fixes — big arenas, convention centers and high-rise hotels. But mayors today are more likely to get behind projects that help rebuild the city from the inside out.

In San Jose, Gonzales partnered with high-tech to champion a half-cent sales tax increase to bring a Bay Area Regional Transit fixed-rail line to his city and pay for other mass transit projects. In San Diego, $7 billion is slated to expand a vast public transit network including more efficient "flex-trolleys," New-Age buses disguised as old-fashioned trolleys. And in Los Angeles, Riordan sought approval for a new "rapid bus" service, along abandoned rail rights-of-way and dedicated arterials.

As recently as 10 years ago, an urban renaissance was considered to hinge almost entirely on bringing new businesses to town. Now residents are considered just as important, if not more so, to growing the economy of the urban

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

core. Jerry Brown promised 10,000 new residents living in Oakland's downtown. San Diego Mayor Richard Murphy wants a series of urban villages to ring his downtown. In San Jose, Gonzales has ushered in an era of in-fill housing calling for 7,000 new multi-family units to be built along transit routes.

But all of these efforts to steer a city onto an upward economic course have their downside, too. Making more room downtown for middle-class residents inevitably means displacement of the poor. Carving out space for more housing can put a crimp in commercial space, impacting small business owners. And land use improvements in older areas are cost-intensive, both in terms of land and infrastructure costs. And all of these come at a great political price to the elected officials in charge, especially the mayor.

If it is a governor's job to lead with a vision of what a state might become, it's a mayor's job to lead with a vision of how to fix what is. With populations that are ethnically diverse and economically divided, California's big-city mayors have their work cut out: rebuilding, reinvigorating and redefining the future.

Kathleen Les is an associate editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

Dick Murphy: A calming hand on San Diego's troubled waters

By Philip J. LaVelle

A few days into his new job, San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy did something that would have been unheard-of during the eight-year reign of his predecessor, Susan Golding. He sent an aide on a diplomacy mission to the City Council's offices to post a sign disclosing the security codes allowing access to the mayor's private office entrance. The sign also invited council members to visit anytime.

"It's different in a very good way," said newly elected Councilwoman Toni Atkins, a longtime council aide. "There's an air of openness."

In office just four months, Murphy is setting a new and curiously unpolitical tone as the 33rd mayor of California's second-largest city.

A former Superior Court judge, Murphy scored an upset victory in November over county Supervisor Ron Roberts, polling 52 percent to his fellow Republican's 48 percent.

Dick Murphy

Murphy, 58, immediately set to change the style — and the mood — at a City Hall held in low public regard in recent years. He presides over council meetings in shirtsleeves and has barred council members from talking on the phone or leaving meetings when citizens are at the microphone.

"I'm impressed," said Glen Sparrow, professor of public administration at California State University, San Diego. "There's this sense of stability. To use an old Navy analogy, there's a solid, calm hand on the tiller."

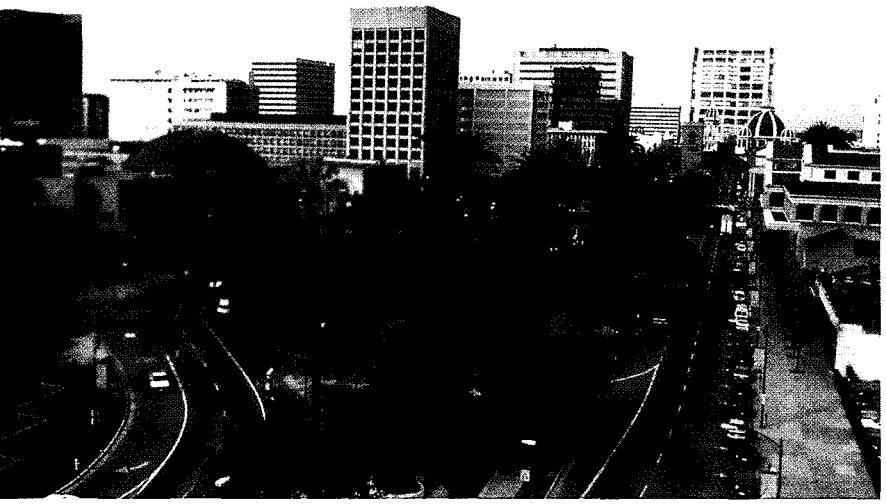
The City Hall that Murphy walked into last December had been tossed by rough seas. The $1 billion San Diego Padres baseball stadium project — the largest redevelopment effort in city history — stalled in October due to legal and financing snags, including a scandal that led one council member to resign. The city's guarantee to cover any losses in San Diego Chargers football ticket sales, a hangover from the Golding era, cost the city treasury nearly $2 million last season. All this on top of the usual San Diego fare — freeway gridlock, beach-and-bay pollution and the decades-long failure to replace Lindbergh Field, the small downtown airport that's nearing capacity.

In his State of the City speech in January, the calm and collected Murphy cited those issues among his Top 10 goals, a list he presented with the dry dispassion of a judge handing down a sentence. He also announced a power-sharing move, naming council members to task forces to find solutions to chronic problems. Later, he moved quickly on a campaign promise to create an ethics commission, and in February he unveiled a plan to jump-start the Padres ballpark.

Murphy also maneuvered his way out of a political crisis. When his pick for the influential San Diego Unified Port District board came under fire for alleged drinking and inappropriate comments, Murphy sacked his nominee, an old friend and campaign fundraiser, replacing him with a prominent gay developer, thereby extending an olive branch to a community that supported Roberts.

Murphy seeks to emulate the style of Pete Wilson, a fellow Illinois native who launched Murphy's political career by appointing him to a vacant council seat two

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



San Diego's Contemporary Art Museum

decades ago. Murphy empowers top aides to speak for him, as Wilson did, but seems intent on spreading power, not accumulating it. Case in point: He transferred the city's chief lobbyist from the mayor's office to the city manager's, giving council members access to a lobbyist who previously had been perceived as working exclusively for Golding, rather than for the entire council.

Few expected Murphy to wind up in the mayor's seat. He was a long shot to survive a 12-candidate primary. But he did, by 169 votes, after embracing statewide ballot propositions banning gay marriage and toughening penalties against juvenile offenders, positions widely touted by religious conservatives.

The conventional political wisdom called the race for Roberts, who ran as a conservative and placed third in the 1992 mayor's race. Last year, Roberts recast himself as a relative liberal and had a superior war chest, campaign organization and list of endorsements.

Murphy touted his independence, calling Roberts a tool of special interests. He also won a Sierra Club endorsement while peeling away some of Roberts' support among Latino business and professional associations.

Meantime, the Roberts campaign was hit by surprises that made incumbency look bad, including the ballpark construction halt; a federal probe of a Roberts ally on the council who did not disclose gifts from Padres owner John Moores; and Roberts' awkward explanations for flights he took with the Padres and on Moores' private jet.

Not good for Roberts, given the city's mood. A poll five days before the election showed 44 percent of San Diegans felt "America's Finest City" was on a not-so-fine path. That proved the ideal environment for Murphy's outsider campaign.

At press time, Murphy was still on his mayoral honeymoon, with high approval ratings. But even if his popularity holds, don't look for an upward career trajectory. In that regard, he may become more of a Richard Riordan than a Pete Wilson.

"You should never say never, but I don't really enjoy campaigns," he said, stressing he has no political aspirations. "To put myself through that, for more than just a reelection campaign for mayor, is an unpleasant thought."

Philip J. LaVelle covers local politics for The San Diego Union-Tribune. *Comments may be sent to* ***edit@statenet.com.***

Richard Riordan: An unexpected rescuer for L.A.'s tattered metropolis.

By Peter Hecht

He came in as an unlikely maverick. Richard Riordan, dressed in rumpled suits, unpolished at public speaking, seemingly unfit for Tinsel Town, insisted he had the poise and the guile to bring Los Angeles back. He was a political novice, a white Republican in a multi-ethnic Democratic city. But he spent $6 million of his own money to win election.

In July 1993, as Korean farm dancers, an Inca folkloric music troupe and a "Children of the World" choir gathered on the steps of City Hall, the multi-millionaire venture capitalist was sworn in as mayor of America's most troubled city. An Irish Catholic, Riordan declared devoutly: "The Scripture says, Do not lose heart — and the city shall be renewed."

Los Angeles was in tatters. It had been devastated by riots after the acquittal of police officers in the Rodney King beating. The city's ethnic quilt was shredded by disharmony. Civic pride had vanished. Only nine years before, L.A.'s spirit — and its economy — had soared with the luminescent flame from the torch of the 1984 Olympics. As Riordan took office, following Mayor Tom Bradley, the city was staggering under the weight of horrid scenes of buildings burned down in the 1992 uprising. Its aerospace

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

industry had gone bust. Real estate was in the tank. Gang violence was unchecked. City Hall was an unresponsive, bureaucratic mess.

Yet Riordan pronounced himself "tough enough to turn L.A. around." He also ebullient y billed himself as a "bleeding heart conservative." He vowed to bring 3,000 new officers and needed equipment to the beleaguered Los Angeles Police Department. He set out to reform City Hall. And he promised an administration based on collaboration and inclusiveness.

Richard Riordan

As Riordan nears the end of his second term, his supporters say Los Angeles is on its way to renewal. Many acknowledge Riordan was helped by a booming national economy during his two terms as mayor. But they also say the city's reawakening is due, in no small way, to Riordan's intense will and his relentless civic boosterism.

L.A.'s downtown is energized with new office buildings, a sports arena and a subway. An expanded port is bringing in billions of dollars in new trade. Riordan browbeat the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to finish its 17.4-mile Red Line — the most expensive subway in history — and then insisted that the transit agency cut its bureaucracy and its losses.

The rich man, who refused his mayoral salary and went to work for $1 a year, made municipal departments more efficient. Some say he rescued the city's Department of Water and Power from certain bankruptcy.

"Look what everybody got for the dollar he was paid," says Steve Soboroff, a former city parks commissioner and a commercial real estate consultant endorsed by Riordan in a crowded election field to be L.A.'s next mayor. "He transitioned a giant bureaucracy that was feeding on itself into an organization that had goals and was completing those goals. It was something the career politicians could never do."

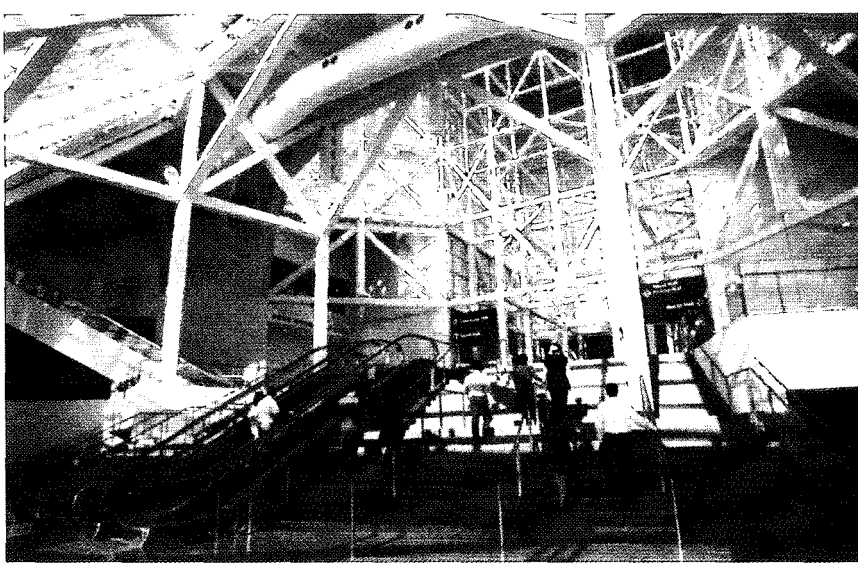
Riordan, who turns 71 on May 1, outwardly lacks pretention. "He refuses to be slick. He refuses to package himself glibly," says California State Librarian Kevin Starr, a longtime acquaintance. But he is also a relentless power player — a big-shoulders mayor in contrast to the consensus-making of his predecessor, the late Tom Bradley.

Riordan fired city commissioners who didn't follow his lead. He tried to fire — but was blocked by the City Council — former Police Chief Willie Williams, once one of the city's most popular figures. And he bankrolled his own slate of candidates to take over the Los Angeles Unified School District, fueling speculation that his next $1 job may be as superintendent of the $9 billion public schools system. His tactics earned respect, as well as some suspicions.

"With his total business mentality, he's failed in his responsibility to be mayor of all the people," says Melanie Lomax, a civil rights attorney and former president of the Los Angeles Police Commission, an oversight board. "He's run City Hall as if it's a corporation and he's chairman of the board. He's intimidated people so that they don't speak independently and are just extensions of his will."

Lomax says the man who once orchestrated a corporate takeover to rescue a toy company, Mattel Inc., has proven less than capable of rescuing Los Angeles. She points to his iron-clad performance goals and deadlines set for hiring new police officers — and says the LAPD was ill-equipped to train and screen the hundreds of new recruits. It was on Riordan's watch that a Rampart Division officer, Rafael Perez, admitted he and fellow anti-gang officers beat, robbed and shot innocent people while fabricating evidence against them. More than 100 convictions were thrown out. Lawsuits have cost the city more than $31 million. "A lot of the corruption — and the rogue cop elements we're seeing — was the result of artifically expanding the department without regard as to who they were taking on," Lomax contends.

Starr, a leading California historian, said the Rampart scandal stems from longstanding problems of the LAPD — not the Riordan administration. "Richard Riordan was the right mayor for Los Angeles through the 1990s," he said. "This is a man who literally helped facilitate the reversal of a city that was on catastrophic collapse." He likens Riordan to Dwight Eisenhower, long an under-appreciated president. Ike's presidential standing and vision have grown with history. Riordan's legacy, Starr insists, will be equally secure.



The Los Angeles Convention Center

Peter Hecht is a senior writer for the Sacramento Bee. *Comments maybe sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Willie Brown: San Francisco's political pro gets put to the test.

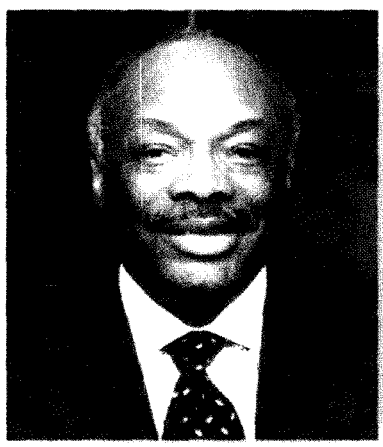
By Edward Epstein

For San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, a wily veteran of four decades in California politics, 2001 has not been easy. During his first five years as mayor, the legendary former Assembly speaker had a hammerlock on the city's Board of Supervisors, always able to count on eight or nine votes on the 11-member body.

But voters last December sent Brown a strong message of discontent with his pro-growth policies. In the city's return to district elections for supervisor after two decades of at-large elections, just about all the Brown-backed candidates lost.

He now faces a board on which he can't count on a single solid vote.

In San Francisco, a publicly defiant Brown is just about alone in claiming that the election wasn't a referendum on his pro-development policies, which plainly have left plenty of residents worried about their future in one of America's most expensive cities.



Willie Brown

"I don't think the voters rejected what I put before the Board of Supervisors," he said shortly after the election. Instead, he blamed a meager voter turnout and the press — with which he maintains a love-hate relationship — for distorting his record.

For Brown, it's all been rather baffling. After all, in his years as mayor, the city's economy has boomed, with the dot.com revolution turning San Francisco into a hip, international high-tech mecca.

Tourism also has boomed during Brown's tenure. The city's downtown Union Square shopping area is jammed, and the San Francisco Giants play before sold-out crowds in their new bayfront Pacific Bell Park.

Brown, known for his Brioni suits and snappy hats, likes to say he brought back a sense of style to the city. He's a regular at trendy restaurants, clubs, movies and high-society soirees.

He also has an eye for the ladies. Separated from his wife, Blanche, for some two decades, Brown recently announced that he and his girlfriend, political fund-raiser Carolyn Carpeneti, are expecting a baby this spring. In San Francisco's tolerant atmosphere, the 67-year-old mayor's announcement caused some good-natured jokes, but didn't raise a ruckus.

Meanwhile, the city's coffers are overflowing. Spending under Brown has zoomed, from just under $3 billion when he ousted Mayor Frank Jordan in 1995, to $4.4 billion today. The city payroll has grown commensurately.

Critics charge that Brown has used the growing payroll to create a political army and that the quality of life hasn't improved, despite the growth in spending. San Francisco still has a big homeless problem, the streets can be dirty and traffic is snarled.

Brown's critics also say that political cronyism, if not outright corruption, has fluorished under his leadership. Some of his friends have prospered during his stay at City Hall, winning city contracts on everything from lobbying for state/local agencies to supervising transit at the airport.

Nonetheless, the mayor can point to some positive accomplishments. Brown entered office with his infamous promise "to fix Muni in 100 days." While he didn't meet that goal, he has lavished money on the city's Municipal Railway, the chronically underfunded transit system, and it is finally showing signs of improved service.

The housing authority, which was in such a shambles when Brown took office that he invited in federal officials to sort things out, has fixed up its properties and improved living conditions for tenants.

The city runs an annual budget surplus of $100 million and its credit rating has been raised. Voters have been generous, approving hundreds of millions of dollars in bond issues to rebuild a city convalescent hospital, construct affordable housing and improve schools, parks, museums and libraries.

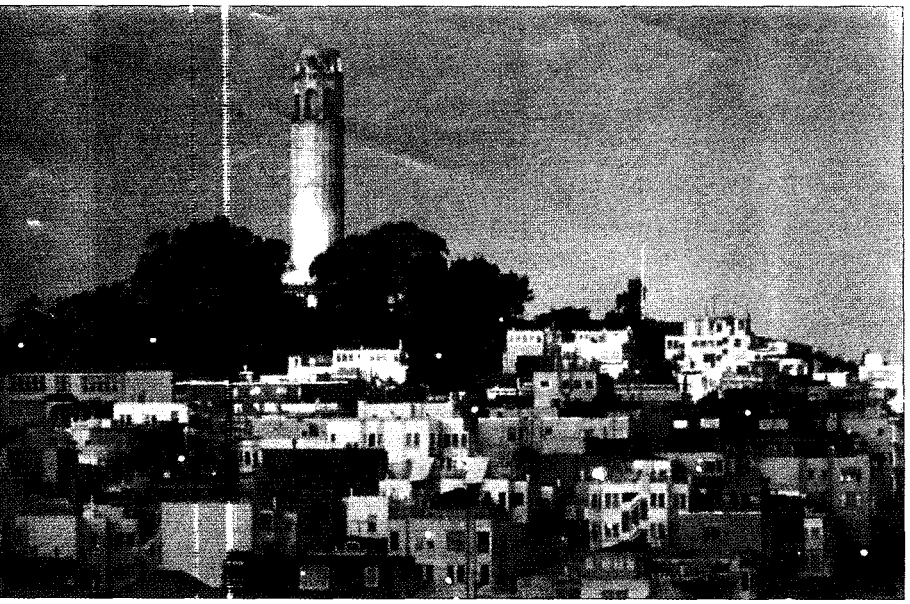
But the boom times — and Brown's fostering of them — have clearly been a double-edged sword. He is close to the city's developers, who've raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for his campaigns, and his Planning Commission backs development after development.

But the battles over live/work artists lofts, a type of development that has thrived through a planning code loophole, have been particularly bloody.

The lofts go up in old industrial neighborhoods, such as the Mission District, Potrero Hill and South of Market. Many residents hate the lofts, viewing them as a symbol of bad planning and the takeover of traditional neighborhoods by rich yuppies.

But Brown, who says half-jokingly that he would like

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



San Francisco's Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill

to see the construction crane named San Francisco's official bird, claims he doesn't see what all the fuss is about.

In his first real run-in with the new Board of Supervisors, Brown blinked. After the board passed a six-month moratorium on new loft permits, Brown said he was mulling a veto, which he knew would be overridden.

In the end, he let the moratorium become law without his signature. But he fired a shot at the board, challenging it to come up with new rules for loft housing within 60 days. Some supervisors wondered out loud why they were expected to do in two months what Brown wouldn't or couldn't do in five years.

Brown's current situation is unique in his long career that began back in segregated Mineola, Texas, where his first job as a shoeshine boy included cleaning out spittoons.

He was first elected to the state Assembly in 1964. A legendary wheeler-dealer, he was re-elected 16 times, leaving only when term limits forced him out. He was elected speaker in 1980, with the support of many Republicans, and held the post for a record 15 years.

Perhaps his proudest moment came in his last term. The 1994 election results, in which Brown lost a Democratic majority, should have finally spelled his demise as speaker, something Republicans had long dreamed of.

Instead, Brown found a Republican Assembly member willing to commit political suicide to help him keep power, confounding his political opponents.

Lots of people say Brown, the old political pro, may yet mount a similar comeback in San Francisco City Hall. Clearly, he is biding his time in watchful waiting, counting on the new supervisors to trip themselves up by offending the city's many diverse interest groups. When they do, he'll pounce.

"He's a master at figuring out who has what power, strengths, weaknesses and what they need," political consultant Phil Giarizzo told the *San Francisco Chronicle* last December.

Brown also subscribes to the old political dictum that there are no permanent enemies, only permanent interests, so he may yet be able to form new alliances.

Like he did with Paul Horcher, the Orange County Republican who sacrificed his career for Brown in 1995. For the sin of backing Brown, Horcher was recalled by voters in his heavily Republican district.

Horcher is now fat and happy in San Francisco, where he is head of the city's recycling programs. He'll have that post until January 2004, when term limits once again force Brown out of a job when his second term as mayor ends.

Edward Epstein covers City Hall for the San Francisco Chronicle. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

Ron Gonzales: City Hall veteran tackles San Jose's high-tech issues

By Kathleen Les

If Gray Davis' long political career made him the best-trained governor in waiting, then San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales holds a similar distinction in the municipal realm. Gonzales' climb up the local government ladder started with service on the Sunnyvale City Council in 1979. After eight years, including a stint as mayor, he served two terms on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

It's not just Gonzales' public sector resume that makes him unique among California's mayoral elite. A long career as an executive with Hewlett Packard gives him credentials with high-tech, the driving economic force in the Silicon Valley. The 49-year-old Gonzales readily embraced their issues — traffic relief, improving public education and strong neighborhoods — to seize a mayoral win two years ago.

Teaming up with the Silicon Valley Manufacturers Association, he won voters' endorsement of his most prized

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

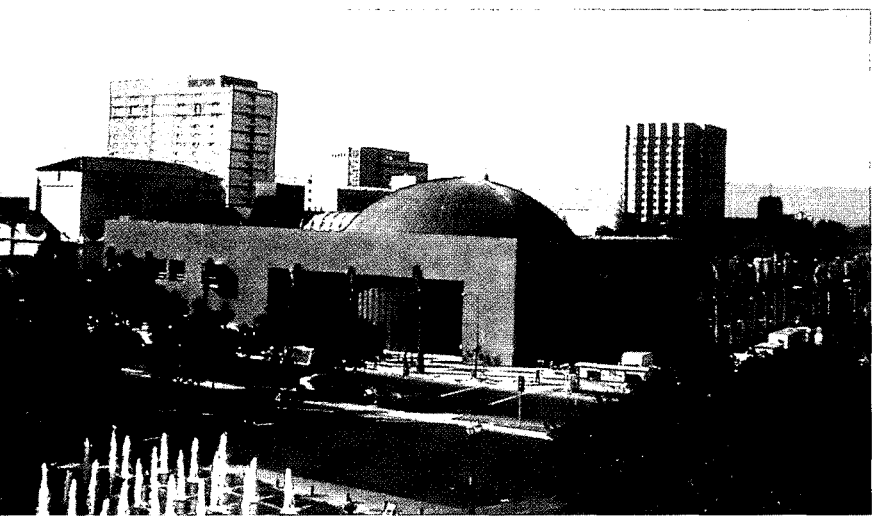
proposal — a half-cent sales tax increase to raise $6 billion to extend the San Francisco-based BART line to San Jose. It and bonds to refurbish the city's libraries and local parks all passed with hefty margins of 70 percent or better.

Local observers see those ballot box successes as an indicator of constituents' confidence in their mayor's leadership. But their passage was even more significant after Gonzales was forced to publicly disclose an extramarital affair with a young city hall staffer just days before the election. He shrugs off suggestion that the dalliance cost him any political capital.

"The people of San Jose judge the mayor by the work the mayor is doing," he said.

Ron Gonzales

Gonzales wasn't expected to take the city by storm when first elected. He ran a low-key, low-risk campaign for mayor, winning by less than expected after failing to earn enthusiastic labor support. Though he has since forged a strong partnership with high-tech titans, they contributed relatively little to his campaign war chest, which totaled over $1 million. Local businesses and developers were a bigger help.



San Jose Museum of Technology

Often on the dissenting side of votes while on the Santa Clara board, Gonzales had little track record building a majority voting block. But since joining the San Jose council, he's honed his agenda and carefully orchestrated support amongst the 10 other council members.

"He doesn't like dissenting votes, so he puts a lot of pressure to bring everybody along," said Terry Christensen, political science professor at California State University, San Jose. While Gonzales has zealously advocated his own priorities, however, Christensen says Gonzales has shown less interest in tackling issues of importance to his fellow council members, which could haunt him in the future.

Eager to bring more jobs to his "housing rich, jobs poor" city, Gonzales shepherded the 20,000-employee office complex sought by software giant Cisco Systems. Destined for San Jose's Coyote Valley, the project met little resistance on its home turf after Gonzales effectively disarmed much of the potential local opposition with his "greenline" initiative, making San Jose one of the nation's largest cities to adopt voter-approved urban growth boundaries.

Gonzales later sided with Cisco Systems in opposing a 600-megawatt power plant proposed for property adjacent to the future worker complex and succeeded in pressing the council to join his opposition. But with California's energy crisis intensifying in recent months, Gonzales has found himself under pressure from Silicon Valley state lawmakers to give the power plant the green light. The San Jose mayor countered with a letter to Governor Gray Davis, calling for a local energy summit to brainstorm smaller scale power alternatives.

So far, Gonzales appears not to have lost the backing of the high-tech industry over the issue, although energy-dependent computer firms could decide to abandon the Silicon Valley if vital power remains in short supply.

Gonzales' failure to cultivate labor during his campaign has resulted in at least one major standoff. When he declined to back labor's plans to fund children's health insurance with tobacco settlement money, he found himself on the losing side of a lopsided council vote.

For those residents shut out of high-tech's wealth, Gonzales has been less of an advocate despite his Latino roots and working class beginnings. "We don't think he digs deep enough into equity issues that disenfranchise a part of the community here," said Marion Steeg of the South Bay Labor Council. "There is a large segment of the population that does not benefit from the Silicon Valley economy."

Though San Jose is already brimming with residential neighborhoods, its proximity to high-tech jobs has pushed housing costs beyond what many workers can afford. Gonzales recently pushed through an anti-sprawl plan that would designate land along light rail lines for development of some 7,000 multifamily housing units. While he has been a strong housing advocate, he's been less insistent on keeping housing affordable.

Gonzales is rumored to have his eyes on higher office, but, with nearly two more years remaining in his mayoral term, he still has time to decide whether to abandon his years inside city hall for some time in Sacramento.

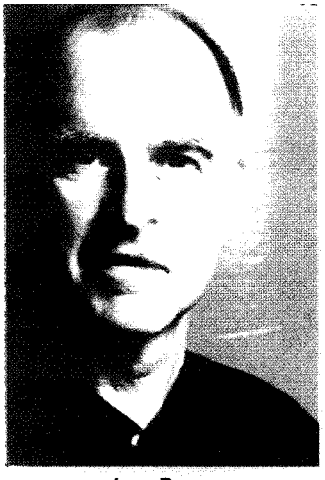
Kathleen Les is an associate editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jerry Brown: Oakland's zen master of urban renewal

By Cynthia H. Craft

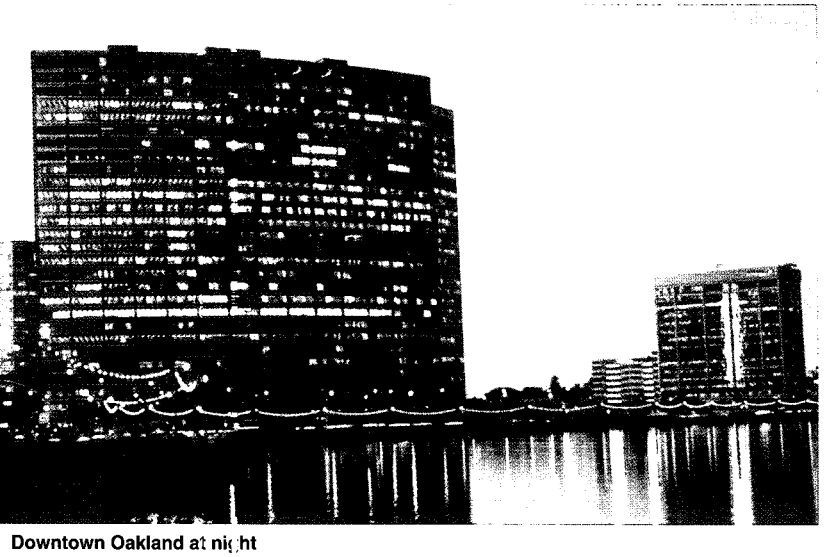
Say what you will about Jerry Brown, the man remains a breed apart from his peers. A generation after emerging as an icon of self-indulgent, celebrity politics, Brown is still breaking the mold — this time for what it means to be mayor. As public servant No. 1 for the City of Oakland, he is reinventing the job, blending a progressive's vision with a booster's pragmatism in pursuit of brighter days for his gritty city by the bay. "Bringing home the bacon," he says, "is what people in the city want."



Jerry Brown

Oaklanders expect Brown to deliver on a bold series of pledges to reduce crime, enliven downtown, attract merchants, upgrade schools and generally infuse their town with capitalistic, high-tech optimism. So far, they like what they see. Upwards of 80 percent — an unheard-of majority in politics — say they approve of the job Brown is doing to heighten Oakland's promise and its profile.

In citing his high points, Brown notes that crime is down 50 percent below the city's 30-year average, several thousand new housing units are planned for downtown and 10,000 new jobs, many of them from the technology sector, have been secured for Oakland. The city's first charter school is set to open this summer and a performing arts school is on the drawing board. Funding for the arts is on the rise and the city ballet has managed to snag a dynamic new director. "Oakland is on the move," says Brown. "It's dramatically better."



Downtown Oakland at night

Investors, notably those in search of well-priced Bay Area real estate, agree with Brown, and are pumping piles of money into downtown. In the urban realm of rebirth, success builds on success. The downside to the economic surge, of course, is what's lost in character when, for example, the quirky waterfront shops of Jack London Square are razed to make way for upscale residential units. Another drawback: a scarcity of affordable housing for struggling artists and low-income families whose rickety homes are getting long-overdue face lifts – and steep rent hikes to boot. One radio talk-show caller who works in a Head Start program said all her students left town with their families, headed for less costly environs in the Central Valley.

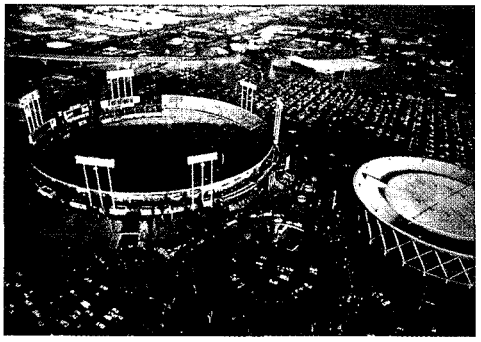
So this is what the mature Jerry Brown, the sexagenarian, the grown-up version of our one-time boy-bachelor governor, is willing to do to deliver: chase down Pentagon dollars, woo wealthy developers, covet casino "sin" taxes, sue in court to upset conflict-of-interest laws *he himself* once championed, advocate a *military* academy. Not to mention tossing out Oakland's first black police chief, ousting its popular school superintendent and handing pink slips to 60 bureaucrats, forcing them to reapply to keep their jobs. And, don't forget, he kicked off his mayorship with a blatant ballot-box power grab to expand authority for himself and every Oakland mayor to follow.

Some of Brown's initiatives strike horror in the hearts of left-leaners squeamish at seeing their high-minded candidate behave in such a ruthlessly results-oriented way. But taken together, the mayor's pet projects seem to fit his stated goals for urban revitalization and a better quality of life for Oaklanders, at least the ones who will still be able to afford to live there. For instance, Brown's harsh, hawkish-sounding proposal for a National Guard school for those in seventh grade and up is designed to accomplish something the public school system apparently cannot: give students a chance to meet standards required for admission to the University of California.

As for grumblings that Brown has turned his back on the poor, the mayor replies, "13 percent of Oakland's housing stock is subsidized....Oakland has a commitment to its diversity and its low-income residents." Mostly, however, Jerry Brown has a commitment to valuing the "local-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ity" of Oakland in a country in which, he says, "cities are under-valued because of a hyper-concentration of power in Washington." Oakland has long been, after all, home to his live-work headquarters, the large industrial building that houses his "We The People" foundation, as well as a handful of associates who live communally with Brown. It is here, as well, where Brown's foundation hosts seminars, yoga and *tai chi* sessions for the public, and where participants can pick up their 360-page reading assignment in time for the next discussion about the meaning of cities.



The Oakland Coliseum

Notwithstanding reporters' inability to resist calling Brown "Governor Moonbeam" after all these years, the mayor has enjoyed a round of good press lately. The glossy Buddhist magazine *Shambhala Sun* featured Brown on the cover as "the most interesting politician in America." His edicts calling for Oakland to rely on "green" alternative energy, wiring subsidized housing for the Internet and his open series of public seminars, lectures and "conversations" have garnered favorable coverage. One progressive columnist called Brown "a blast of fresh air."

But the blast seems to be all Brown's. Would you believe he likes this gig better than he ever liked being governor?

"It's a very exciting job that I've enjoyed more than any other," Brown said. "You can see the buildings go up, the street corners changing. You can sense people's excitement. It's more satisfying, as opposed to the mediated, theatrical existence of governor. As governor, there are several levels of abstraction. You are removed from the reality you affect."

Cynthia H. Craft is editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

The other big cities: California's up-and-comers

By A.G. Block

Ask someone from the East or Midwest to name California's biggest cities, and the answer likely will include Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and Oakland – four of the five cities whose mayors are profiled in this issue. It is less certain that the fifth city, San Jose, will be named unless the person either remembers Dionne Warwick's hit song from the 1960s or is plugged into high-tech.

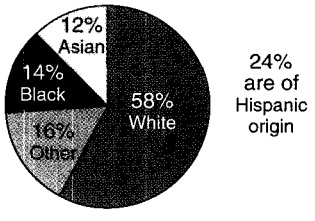
Four of the profiled cities rank in California's top five in terms of population, but folks in Virginia or Kansas may be surprised to discover that Oakland actually has fewer residents than either Long Beach, Fresno or Sacramento. Those other burgs just don't have the Athletics, Raiders and Gertrude Stein to make them famous.

To round out the picture, we've chosen five additional cities of note — those that have changed and prospered in part because the five "big" cities have become expensive and congested. Now, of course, these emerging cities are themselves struggling with the same forces that shaped the big five.

Long Beach

Mayor: Beverly O'Neill
Population: 457,608
10-year growth: 6.6 percent

Sprawled along the coast just south of Los Angeles, Long Beach is California's fifth-largest city in terms of population, trailing only Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose and San Francisco. It boasts one of the West Coast's most active ports, where the Queen Mary is anchored as a floating hotel and convention complex. An industrial center, the city's largest employer is Boeing, with 17,850 employees. Politically, registered Democrats outnumber Republicans almost two-to-one, while nearly 14 percent of registered voters are decline-to-state. Long Beach has produced one recent governor – Republican George Deukmejian, who served from 1982 to 1990.



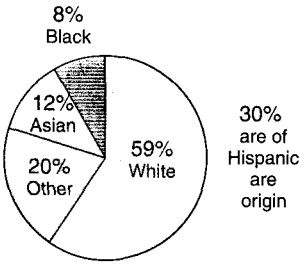
Long Beach

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fresno

Mayor: Alan Autry
Population: 420,594
10-year growth: 18.7 percent

Fresno, the largest city in the Central Valley and sixth largest in the state, has seen its population soar by more than 150 percent over the past 30 years — making it a metaphor for the kind of growth that has exploded throughout California's inland valleys. Politically, Democrats hold a 45-percent-to-41-percent edge in voter registration, although the city and region are perennial battlegrounds between the two parties. Currently, the most prominent area politician is Secretary of State Bill Jones, a Republican.

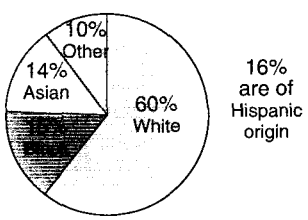


Fresno

Sacramento

Mayor: Heather Fargo
Population: 405,963
10-year growth: 9.9 percent

California's Capital City weathered severe cutbacks in military spending during the 1990s, which saw the closure of two major Air Force bases and an U.S. Army supply depot. Still, the region grew spurred in large measure by the influx of high-tech companies escaping cramped and expensive confines in the Silicon Valley and relocating in Sacramento's suburban environs. The city of Sacramento is overwhelmingly Democratic, although its suburban enclaves tend to lean Republican. The city currently boasts one home-grown statewide officeholder — Treasurer Phil Angelides, a Democrat.

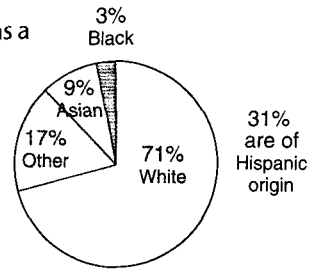


Sacramento

Anaheim

Mayor: Tom Daly
Population: 310,654
10-year growth: 16.6 percent

California's ninth-and 10th-largest cities are Orange County neighbors — Santa Ana and Anaheim. Santa Ana has a slight edge in population (317,685 to 310,654), while Anaheim is more famous thanks to Disneyland and major league baseball's Anaheim Angels. Politically, Republicans outnumber Democrats 53,524 to 43,475 in Anaheim. The area's most prominent politico in recent years has been Republican Curt Pringle, who served as Assembly speaker in 1996.

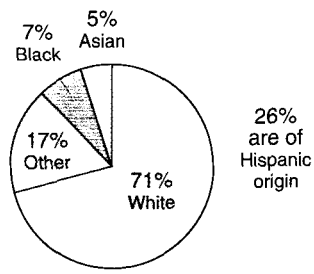


Anaheim

Riverside

Mayor: Ron Loveridge
Population : 259,738
10-year growth: 14.7 percent

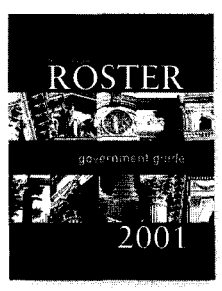
The largest city in the fast-growing Inland Empire, Riverside is the 11th ranked city in California in terms of population. Like the Sacramento region in the north, the Riverside area also was hit hard by defense cutbacks and base closures. And like Sacramento, it has recovered thanks to a diversifying industrial and business base. Politically, Riverside reflects the Inland Empire's Republican leanings. Slightly more than 45 percent of the city's 106,575 registered voters consider themselves Republicans; 39 percent are registered Democrats. One of the most prominent area politicians in recent years is Democrat Bob Presley, who served in the Legislature from 1974 to 1994 and now is secretary of the Youth and Adult Corrections Agency under Governor Gray Davis.



Riverside

A.B. Block is editor-in-chief of StateNet publications. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

2001 Roster & Govenment Guide is available now! $3.50 each



Bulk orders are also available. Please see enclosed order form for more information

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leaders of the Pack....How

Cities at a glance

Los Angeles

Population: 3.8 million
Area: 468 square miles
Households: 1.2 million
City budget: $4.3 billion
Gross metropolitan product: $334 billion
Economic rank: 2nd U.S., 17th world
Voter registration: Dem-59%, Rep-22%

Oakland

Population: 402,100
Area: 56 square miles
Households: 144,521
City budget: $391 million
Gross metropolitan product: $83 billion
Economic rank: 20th U.S., 60th world
Voter registration: Dem-57%, Rep-20%

San Diego

Population: 1.3 million
Area: 330 square miles
Households: 406,096
City budget: $621 million
Gross metropolitan product: $95 billion
Economic rank: 17th U.S., 53rd world
Voter registration: Dem-36%, Rep-41%

San Francisco

Population: 801,400
Area: 47 square miles
Households: 305,584
City budget: $4.4 billion
Gross metropolitan product: $99 billion
Economic rank: 15th U.S., 49th world
Voter registration: Dem-56%, Rep-14%

San Jose

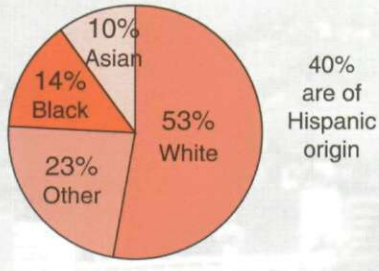
Population: 923,600
Area: 179 square miles
Households: 250,218
City budget: $2 billion
Gross metropolitan product: $75 billion
Economic rank: 23rd U.S., 65th world
Voter registration: Dem-46%, Rep-30%

Top 8 cities by population

1. Los Angeles	3,823,000
2. San Diego	1,277,000
3. San Jose	923,600
4. San Francisco	801,400
5. Long Beach	457,600
6. Fresno	420,600
7. Sacramento	406,000
8. Oakland	402,100

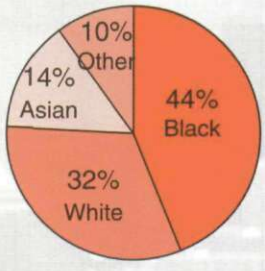
Racial grouping

Residents of mixed race and ethnicity are more prevalent in California's big cities than in the state as a whole. The statistics below are based on 1990 U.S. Census data, the latest available at press time, which do not document persons of Hispanic origin as a separate racial group. Hispanics as a percentage of the total population are listed below.



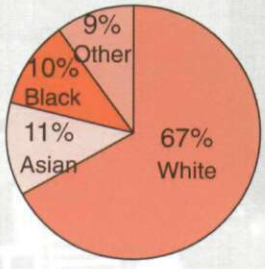
40% are of Hispanic origin

Los Angeles



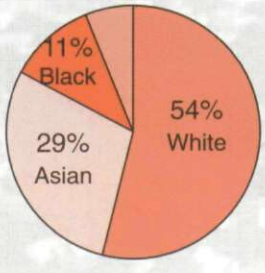
19% are of Hispanic origin

Oakland



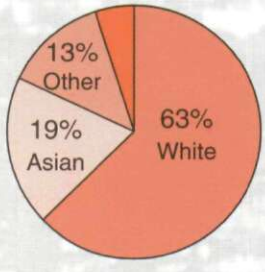
21% are of Hispanic origin

San Diego



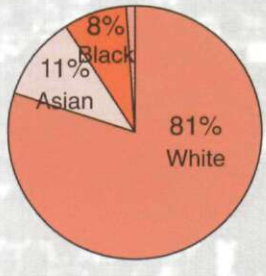
14% are of Hispanic origin

San Francisco



27% are of Hispanic origin

San Jose



27% are of Hispanic origin

California

Sources: California Cities, Towns and Counties, 2001 Information Publications; 1990 U.S. Census; CA Dept. of Finance; Cities of LA, Oak, SD, SF, SJ; U.S. Conference of Mayors; County Election Offices

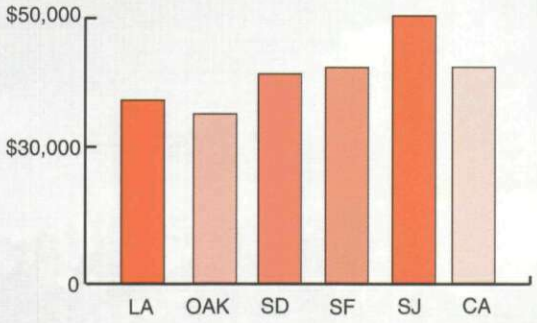
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

California's big cities compare

Here's a look at how five of the state's biggest municipalities stack up with the state as a whole.

Median income

San Jose had the highest annual family median income at $50,281 in 1990; Oakland had the lowest at $31,755.

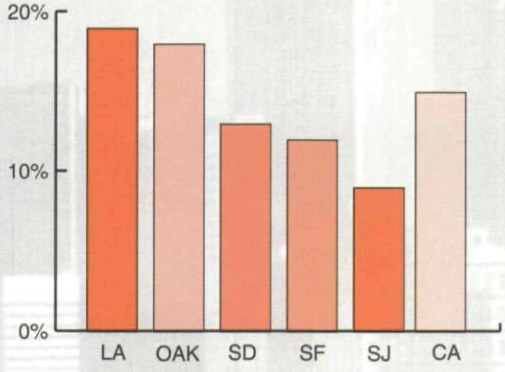


Population growth

Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco grew far slower than the state's double-digit growth in the last decade.

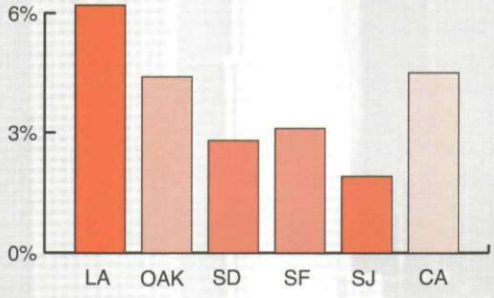
Persons in poverty

Los Angeles and Oakland had the highest concentration of residents living in poverty in 1990; San Jose's percentage was well below the statewide average.



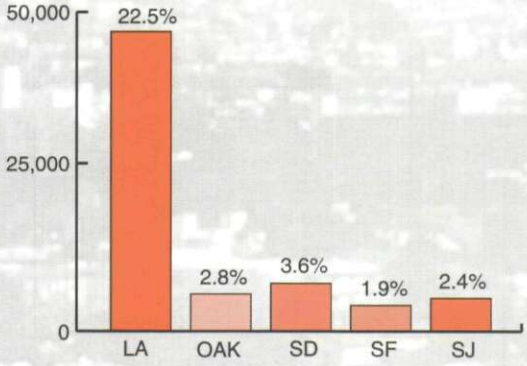
Unemployment

Los Angeles had the highest unemployment rate (6.2%) in January 2001; San Jose, in the heart of Silicon Valley, posted the lowest, just under 2%.



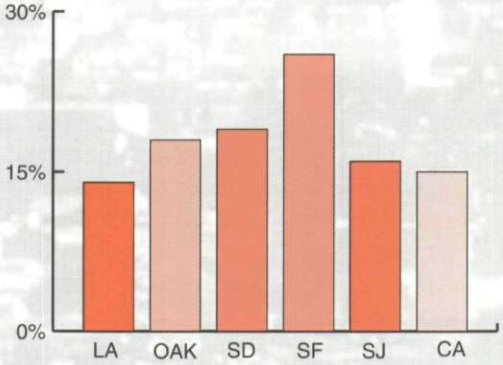
Public safety

Of the 207,874 violent crimes statewide in 1999, nearly one quarter occured in Los Angeles.



Education

San Francisco had the highest percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree (26%) in 1990.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Energy Drain

In the state Capitol, the continuing saga over electricity deregulation is leaving lawmakers with little time, not to mention money, for other legislative concerns. Despite a projected $8 billion state budget surplus, needy programs in health care, education and agriculture may be fed little more than table scraps this year.

By Noel Brinkerhoff

When newly elected Assemblywoman Rebecca Cohn arrived at the Capitol in January, she assumed she'd have time during her first months in office to meet with lawmakers from both houses to discuss her legislative priorities for the coming year. Although new to the process, the San Jose Democrat understood the importance of sounding out members of the Assembly and Senate to gauge support for her proposals.

But Cohn's strategy got zapped — by the all-consuming energy crisis that has tied up the Legislature, sucking up staff time, dominating caucuses and eating into hours that might otherwise have been spent reading and prepping other issues.

For freshman lawmakers, Cohn jokes: "This is like a pre-arranged marriage with a bad pre-nup. There was no honeymoon, no indication there ever will be a honeymoon. I thought there would be greater balance of the issues at this point."

Cohn isn't the only lawmaker who's been thrown by the Capitol's single-minded pursuit of a solution to California's energy fiasco. Veteran state Senator Dede Alpert, whose San Diego-based district was one of the first to feel the pain of deregulation last summer, says Democrats in her house have had "more caucuses in a month than we've had in two years — and they are all focused completely on energy."

Indeed, California's power woes have made it virtually impossible for lawmakers — freshmen and veterans alike — to pay more than scant attention to other pressing problems facing the state. For Cohn, Alpert and others, as well as the many lobbyists *not* representing the PG&Es and Enrons of the energy world, the sheer weight of the crisis has led to frustration and worry that such issues as health care, education and agriculture — just to name three — may wind up without the attention they need. Even if time is freed up to focus on non-energy matters, it is unclear how much money will be available, given Governor Gray Davis' commitment to spend billions to buy electricity and to prevent Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and Southern California Edison from going bankrupt.

Back in January, when Davis unveiled his 2001-02 budget plan, the governor proclaimed California once again awash in extra cash — as much as $8 billion. But in almost no time, by mid-February in fact, more than $2

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Illustration by Sandra Hoover

billion of state money had been gobbled up by unexpected spot-market power purchases — at a rate of approximately $50 million a day — to keep rolling blackouts from enveloping California. As part of his solution to solve the deregulation problem, Davis has promised to pay back the state budget with bond money to prevent other priorities from suffering.

Already, though, some projects are in danger of losing their proposed budget funding because of deregulation costs. According to the *Orange County Register*, local leaders in Santa Ana, Anaheim, Garden Grove and other cities statewide are lamenting the redirection of $30 million in parks and community funding into bonuses for power companies that open new plants before the summer en-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Steve Thompson, California Medical Association

Like other lobbyists, Warmerdam has had trouble "getting through the other noise" — namely energy discussions — to raise her concerns with legislators.

ergy crunch hits the state's electrical grid. Roger Salazar, a Davis spokesman, told the *Register* that the governor plans to repay the money "at some point." But even if he does, the delay could put the projects way behind schedule, according to Republican Assemblyman Richard Dickerson of Redding, vice chair of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee.

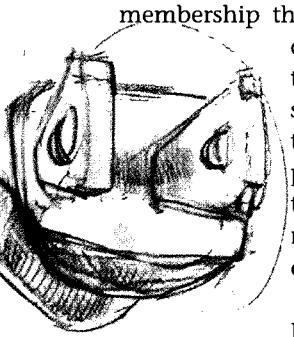
Meanwhile, many lawmakers aren't confident that all, or any, of the budget money being spent on energy will be backfilled by the time the Legislature approves the final state budget proposal in June. "It sounds good [to say] there will be a revenue stream to protect us and everything," says Alpert. "I'm just weary about it. You wouldn't want to make any budget decisions with that hanging over your head. I certainly hope and pray that [the governor's plan] turns out to be true, but I'm nervous that it's not going to."

Consequently, lawmakers like Cohn have resorted to drawing up "money-lite" agendas this session in response to the ongoing fiscal uncertainty. "I've specifically looked for legislation that was low on the appropriation list," she says. "The concern over whether or not resources would be available had an impact on my bill package."

But Cohn wasn't able to avoid pricey proposals altogether. One of her most important bills, AB 905, would make available $15 million in state funds for police officers and firefighters struggling to make down payments on homes in costly regions such as Silicon Valley. "That [bill] certainly would be a question mark for me," she said. "I'm hoping there will be money for it."

Join the club

Cohn isn't alone in her worries. Assemblyman Kevin Shelley, a San Francisco Democrat and majority floor leader, said "There is great concern on the part of the membership that the economic impact of this [energy crisis] will cut into the ability to do other things that are equally important." The same sentiment exists on the Senate side of the Legislature, according to Alpert. "When people come to visit about other issues, I tell them I don't know if we will have the money. This [crisis] may suck every penny out of this [budget]."



Lobbyists are wary, too. The California Medical Association this year is urging the state to shore up its system of emergency medical care, reportedly on the verge of collapse. According to a CMA analysis of hospitals and medical centers around the state, ambulances are being rerouted too frequently, hospitals are shutting down or scaling back emergency services, and patients are waiting hours for treatment. The report warns the state faces a choice: "Act now and save a system on the brink of disaster, or ignore the warning signs and watch the system flat line and die."

Mary-Ann Warmerdam, California Farm Bureau Federation

Steve Thompson, CMA's vice president of government relations, says that, without attention, the state's emergency care system could become "the next crisis after energy." Thompson is urging lawmakers to approve two CMA-backed bills that will provide $300 million for emergency care providers. But as important as those bills may be, Thompson realizes the current energy mess could make it tough for the state to commit funds for emergency care. "Our legislation requires funding, and given the rate at which they're spending money on energy, nobody is looking at new dollars for anything else."

Meanwhile, California's agricultural industry has its own problems, according to Mary-Ann Warmerdam, director of natural resources for the California Farm Bureau Federation. And like others, Warmerdam has had trouble "getting through the other noise" — namely energy discussions — to raise her concerns with legislators. Between sagging prices for farm commodities and rising energy costs, "This is going to be a challenging year for farmers," she says, especially those trying to obtain bank financing.

Warmerdam has been hoping that lawmakers will free up grants for developing new markets for California commodities, such as converting sugar beets to ethanol. Grants, of course, require budget money. When asked if such an appropriation will be difficult to garner in the state's new fiscal atmosphere, Warmerdam replied, "Absolutely."

Bonds? Fuhgettaboutit!

The agricultural community also is experiencing a great deal of anxiety over the status of California's water supply. For years, farmers have clamored for the state to expand its water storage capacity in light of growing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wayne Johnson, California Teachers Association

populations and projected water shortfalls over the next two decades. "If we're not careful, we will find ourselves in the same conversation as today on energy but on the water side," said Warmerdam.

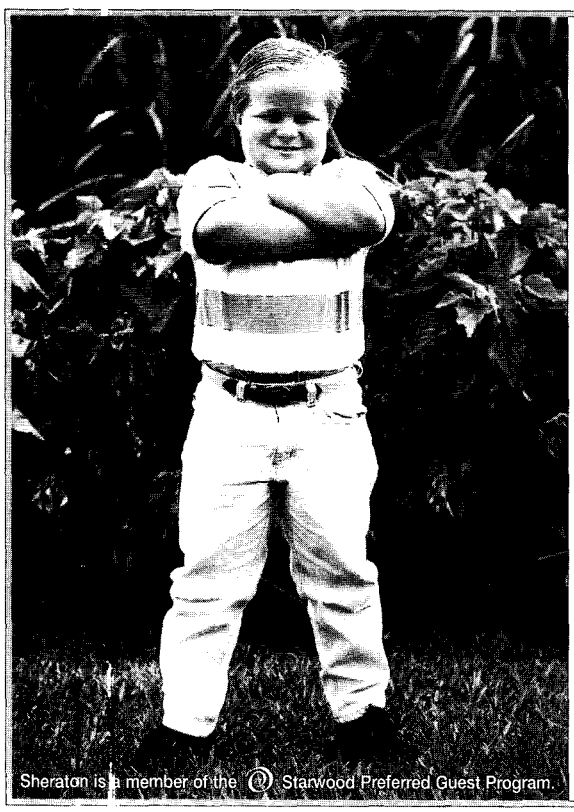
Building more surface reservoirs or underground storage will require an investment of millions, perhaps billions, of dollars. Farmers see a state water bond as a means of financing such projects. Early discussions of a water bond have been conducted by state Senator Jim Costa (D-Fresno), but if the governor's proposal to issue $10 billion in revenue bonds for energy purchases goes through, the state's debt load might not have room for additional bond proposals. As one Capitol water expert privately acknowledged, a water bond is "pretty low on the priority list."

The same may be true for another school bond. Although it was only three years ago when voters approved a $9.2 billion plan for new school facilities, education leaders say it wasn't enough money to meet all the demands statewide. Proposition 1A's money "went in a wink of an eye," according to Wayne Johnson, president of the California Teachers Association. Thus, another school bond is needed, he says. But given the slowing state economy and the energy crisis driving up Californian's utility bills, Johnson admits support for a second bond may be difficult to muster.

And if bonds aren't politically feasible, there may not be anywhere else to turn to for the money. In her February assessment of the governor's budget plan, Legislative Analyst Elizabeth Hill warned lawmakers to hold off on allocating at least 25 percent of the projected $8 billion surplus because of the ambiguity over how much money will be consumed by energy needs. And thanks to a less vibrant stock market and downsizing in the Internet job sector, the state's overall revenue picture isn't likely to contain any April surprises akin to those of the last two years, when tax collections bulged state coffers.

In the meantime, Majority Leader Shelley expects lawmakers to keep working their bills, energy and non-energy alike, in hopes of an optimistic outcome. Barring that, he says, legislative leaders may have to make some tough spending decisions. "I suspect more bills will die in [the] appropriations [committee] than in past years," he said.

Noel Brinkerhoff is an associate editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**



Who's taking care of you?℠

Sheraton Grand Sacramento HOTEL

There's a new kid on the block.

The Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel–Opening late April 2001.

$175* Mon.-Thurs.
$119* Fri.-Sun.

Set in one of Sacramento's most popular downtown areas, you'll experience the incredible level of service synonymous with the Sheraton name in a legendary designed building. And for a limited time, take advantage of our special rates and earn double Starwood Preferred Guest℠ points while doing so.*

- Located in the beautifully restored, historic Public Market Building
- 503 comfortable guest rooms, including 27 suites
- 20,000 square feet of flexible event space, including a 10,500-square-foot ballroom
- An open kitchen concept restaurant in a Market atrium setting
- Fully-equipped fitness center overlooking an outdoor heated pool
- Located near the Convention Center and Capitol Building
- A 15-minute drive to the Sacramento International Airport

For reservations, call 800-325-3535, visit **sheraton.com** or call your travel planner.

*The $175 rate is per room, per night and valid Monday-Thursday only. The $119 rate is per room, per night and valid Friday-Sunday only. Rates apply through September 3, 2001, are subject to availability and do not include taxes or gratuities. A limited number of rooms may be available at these rates. Rates applicable for single or double occupancy. Not applicable to groups/conventions and not combinable with other offers/promotions. Blackout dates and additional restrictions may apply. Must be a member of the Starwood Preferred Guest Program to qualify. Double points apply to base Starpoints only. Additional restrictions may apply. Valid at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento only.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Armenian-Americans as political players

Armenian deportees in a camp of makeshift tents. Syria 1915.
Two boys with bare and bandaged feet who starved to death in the open desert, Syria 1915-1916.
Armenia — wom and eld Syria re
Deportees — mostly women — sleeping in the street, Syria 1915.
Armenians hang on a Constantinople street just before the deportation to the desert began.
Gordium
Tuz Gölü
(Caesarea Mazaca) Kayse
(Iconium)
Tyana
Cilician Gates
Ereğli (Heraclea)
CRETE
Seventh Crusade 1248

For Armenian-Americans, April is the cruelest month of all, a reminder of the bloody purge in their ancestral homeland 86 years ago that sent hundreds to their deaths. Fueled by the passion of that memory, Armenian-Americans are united as perhaps few other minority groups, wielding considerable political clout – from California's Capitol to the halls of Congress.

By Michael Doyle

When Armenian-Americans talk, lawmakers listen. From Capitol Hill to Sacramento, that political reality is all the more noteworthy because, as an ethnic minority, Armenian-Americans are but a blip on the population radar screen.

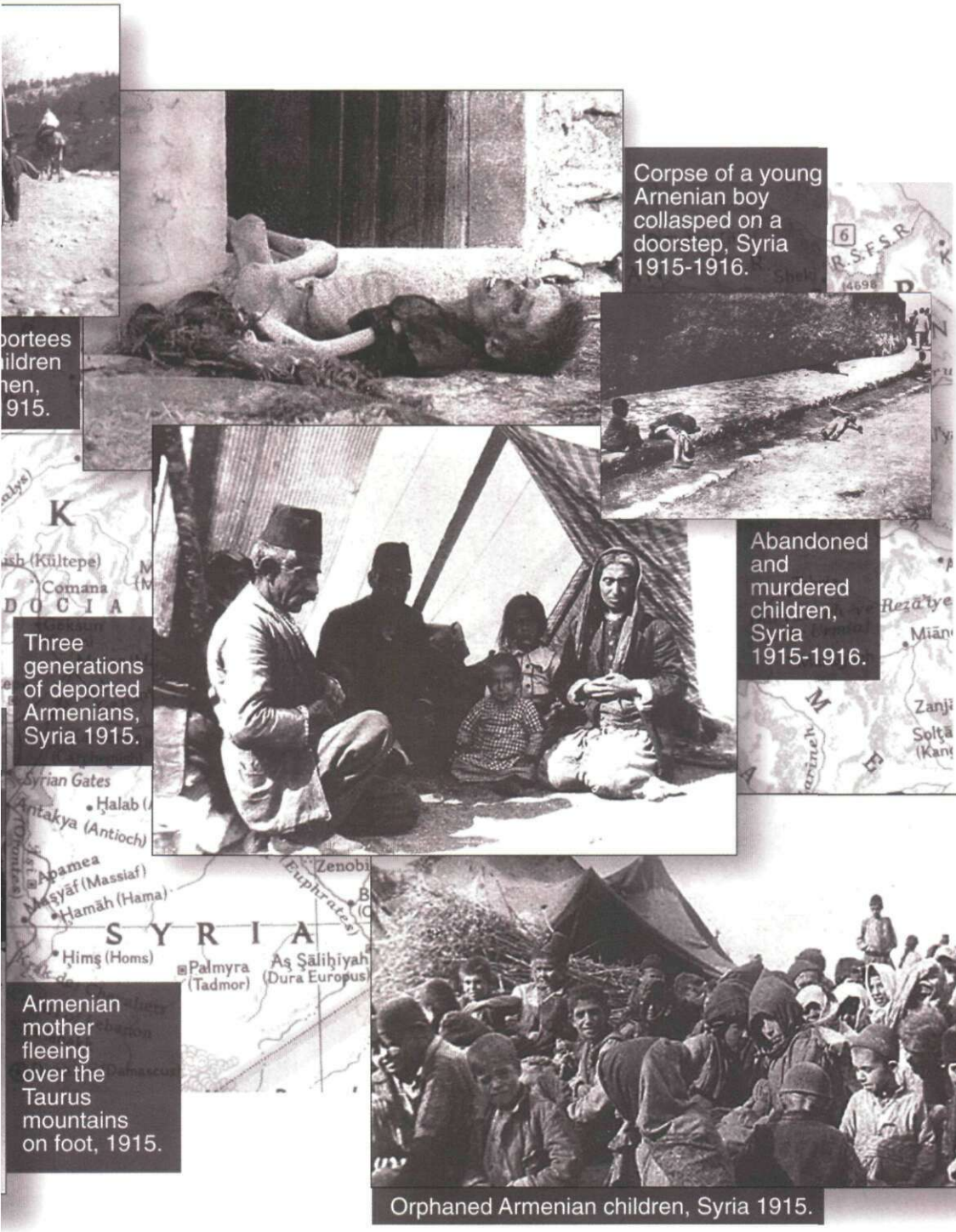
Yet, after decades of diaspora, privation and prejudice, Armenian-Americans have earned a striking reputation for political clout that is often deployed in the service of painful memories.

Consider that:

• Thanks to Armenian-American lobbying and dutiful tending by sympathetic lawmakers, Armenia is now the second leading per-capita recipient of U.S. foreign aid, behind Israel. For six years running, Congress has increased Armenian aid beyond White House requests; this year, the $90 million for Armenia is $15 million more than the administration sought.

• Legislatures from Sacramento to Paris have, at the behest of Armenia-minded constituents, waded into the business of historical interpretation by officially declaring the murderous period from April 1918 to 1923 to be the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


Corpse of a young Arnenian boy collasped on a doorstep, Syria 1915-1916.
Abandoned and murdered children, Syria 1915-1916.
Three generations of deported Armenians, Syria 1915.
Armenian mother fleeing over the Taurus mountains on foot, 1915.
Orphaned Armenian children, Syria 1915.

The photos on this page were taken by Armin T. Wegner, a German army second-lieutenant stationed in the Ottoman Empire in April 1915. Disobeying orders intended to stifle news of the Armenian massacres, he took hundreds of photographs of the deportation camps, primarily in the Syrian desert. Wegner was eventually arrested but was able to smuggle these photos out. Photos are courtesy of the Armenian National Institute's Web site, www.armenian-genocide.org.

"Armenian Genocide."

• The 70-plus members of the Armenian Caucus in Congress are credited with enacting long-running restrictions on direct U.S. aid to Azerbaijan, a troubled and oil-rich neighbor that has long been at odds with Armenia.

"They do a better lobbying job than most," Representative George Radanovich (R-Mariposa) said of Armenian-Americans, comparing their influence to that of other ethnic minorities.

That influence is all the more remarkable because, numerically speaking, Armenians are not a sizable ethnic group. There are about 1 million Americans of Armenian descent in the United States, about 500,000 of whom live in California, concentrated primarily in Fresno and the Glendale-Pasadena area of Southern California.

While modest in numbers, the reasons behind the political clout of Armenian-Americans illustrate why some populations not only speak louder but are heard better than others. The Armenian-American population is culturally cohesive, bound in part by a distinct religion — the Armenian Apostolic Church, which has at least eight churches in Glendale and six in neighboring Pasadena. That contributes to a common message and a shared interest in the old country. The population is concentrated,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which amplifies the message heard by local politicians. The population's major immigration flow to the United States occurred decades ago, enabling assimilation into the political system while still retaining its ethnic identity.

"By and large, on issues that relate to Armenia and the Armenian Genocide, Armenians share basic beliefs," said Barlow Der Mugrdechian,

professor of Armenian Studies at California State University, Fresno. Plus, "The community has structures in place, (like) the church, the Armenian Assembly (and) the Armenian National Committee, which have become effective voices for the community."

A look at legislation

This year, for instance, the state Senate has before it a bill to establish a California trade office in Armenia. The trade office would cost up to $149,000 a year, in a country that in 1999 imported only $10 million worth of California products, less than the likes of Fiji or Qatar.

But California's Fijian and Qatarian populations are considerably quieter than the Armenian population concentrated in the district of SB 179's author, Jack Scott (D-Burbank). Explicitly citing the 500,000 Armenians living in California, Scott's bill says the trade office is necessary because "Armenia...continues to privatize small businesses and state-run enterprises, providing opportunities for local and foreign investors."

Not that the Armenian-American population wins every fight; just ask Jim Rogan. Make that, former Republican congressman Jim Rogan, the one-time House impeachment manager who was ousted last November by Democrat Adam Schiff. While Rogan and Schiff spent $11.2 million attacking each other in the 27th Congressional District race, there was one issue on which they found common ground: Armenia, a far-away country slightly smaller than the state of Maryland.

With at least five Armenian language newspapers and three Armenian-language cable television stations, the 27th Congressional District is rich with voters who maintain strong ethnic ties. So when House Speaker Dennis Hastert last year was stumping for Rogan, he naturally met privately with Armenian-American community leaders. Hastert promised he'd bring to the House floor legislation co-sponsored by Rogan and Radanovich that called public attention to "the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923."

The promise was tactically clever in helping Hastert's efforts to retain a House majority. Ethnic politics, besides, are a Capitol Hill tradition. But this particular promise also plunged the House speaker into a diplomatic muddle involving one of America's most crucially placed allies and the meaning of tragic memories.

"Today these memories live in the hearts and minds of many of my friends and thousands of my constituents," Rogan said on the House floor in 1999. "It is our duty not to let these memories fade."

Reliving the genocide

Armenian Genocide legislation is a Capitol Hill perennial, going back at least to 1975. Broadly speaking, the legislation summons forth the events that began April 24, 1915, when Armenian leaders were rounded up in the dying years of the Ottoman Empire. Murders, rampage and forced deportations followed. Marshaling considerable evidence and the attestations of professional historians, as well as esteemed Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, proponents of genocide resolutions contend the resulting deaths of 1.5 million Armenians clearly meet the definition of genocide: the intentional destruction of an entire people.

"Today these memories live in the hearts and minds of many of my friends and thousands of my constituents," Rogan said on the House floor in 1999. "It is our duty not to let these memories fade." — former GOP Congressman James Rogan

But the question persists: Was it genocide or simply a brutal and chaotic war? Turkish Embassy officials wrote in one summary that "Armenians, indeed, died in the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire, but so did hundreds of thousands of Turks inhabiting the area, as a consequence of the inter-communal violence unleashed by Armenians."

"This issue," the State Department's foreign service chief, Marc Grossman, urged lawmakers last year, "should really be in the hands of historians and scholars."

Grossman, a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey, was not simply counseling academic detachment. Strategically situated, Turkey borders Syria, Iraq and Iran and is the southernmost member of NATO, home to U.S. warplanes flying out of Turkey's Incirlik Air Force Base.

"The Turks have been our friends and allies throughout the Cold War," said Rep. Dan Burton, the volatile Indiana Republican who chairs the House Government Reform Committee. "And so what are we going to do, give them a slap in the face?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

San Mateo Democratic Congressman Tom Lantos, a survivor of the World War II Holocaust, similarly termed the genocide measure "singularly counterproductive to our national interest."

But Congressman Brad Sherman (D-Sherman Oaks) cast the national interest in a different light, saying that "if we reject this because it's bad for (Turkish military) basing rights, then what credibility do we have in the world?"

The diverging opinions come draped in intensely bitter feelings. Newspaper articles raising doubts about the genocide resolution invariably draw heated letters and e-mails from Armenian-Americans. Turkish officials are equally impassioned. In the back of a crowded House International Relations Committee hearing room last year, a Turkish Embassy official quickly drew for a reporter a detailed map of the Russian and Armenian battle lines in 1918: Here, the official said angrily, stabbing at the map, just look at the circumstances back then, the obvious threat to the Ottoman Empire.

A GOP fumble?

Bolstered by Hastert's promise to the embattled Rogan, last year's resolution seemed destined for House passage. Until October, when Israelis and Palestinians began killing each other again in earnest. Blood was in the streets, the Middle East peace process was unraveling, and Turkey was attempting to be a peacemaker, utilizing its ties with Israel. Turkey was also considering whether to renew U.S. rights to Incirlik, and whether to buy U.S. military helicopters made in Texas.

The timing was entirely inauspicious for the House to consider a resolution that the painfully sensitive Turkish government considered a kick in the teeth. Nonetheless, proponents of the Armenian genocide legislation appeared indifferent to the Middle East circumstances. Turkey, they said, will always find one excuse or another to avoid judgment.

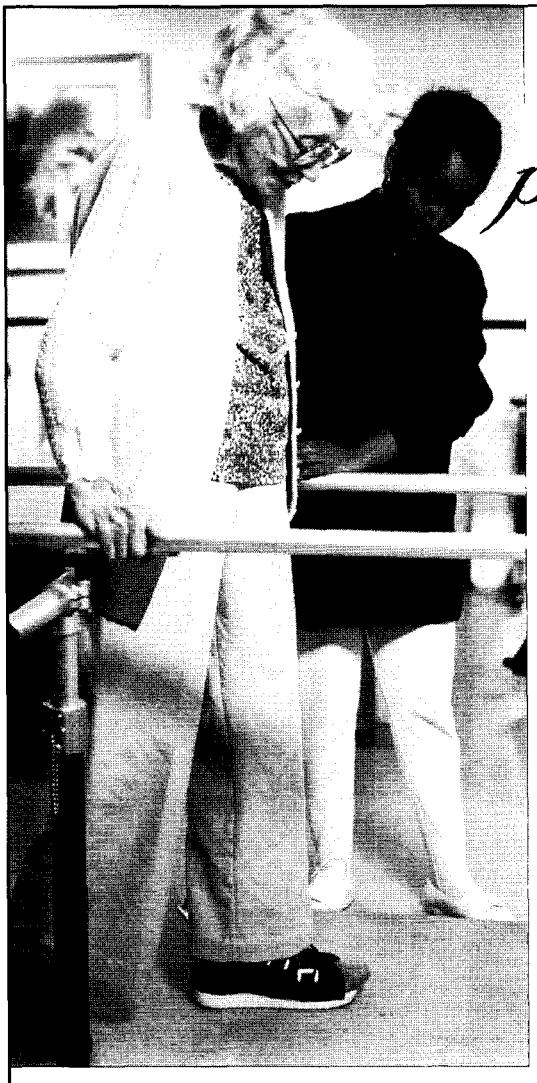
But literally minutes before House debate was to begin the night of Oct. 19 — and without bothering to warn Radanovich and others — Hastert responded to a written request from President Clinton and pulled the bill.

It was a broken promise by Hastert, who had assured Rogan's constituents the bill would get a House vote. Republicans, though, directed the blame elsewhere.

"Clinton/Gore Administration Kills Armenian Genocide Resolution," Radanovich's subsequent press release declared.

Radanovich insisted the House speaker "had no choice but to accede to the president's request" based on national security concerns raised by the White House. At the same time, he urged constituents to call the White House to protest, helpfully including the White House's phone number.

It's a given that the genocide reso-



"I'm *proud* of the important work I do"

Skilled caregivers, adequate funding and government support for this dignified profession mean California cares about meeting the needs of the disabled and those requiring assisted living and skilled nursing services in long-term care facilities.

Thanks to the heartfelt efforts of caregivers and the commitment of government policymakers, achievements are being made in the effort to provide the quality care we all want for our loved ones.

Become part of our caregiving team. Make this important work *your* concern, too.

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES
CAHF
Supporting People, Health and Quality of Life

California Association of Health Facilities
Sacramento, CA
(916) 441-6400
www.cahf.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As it does every April, an Armenian genocide resolution will be heard in the House. "If we push it a little bit harder, maybe we will succeed this time."
— U.S. Representative George Radanovich

lution by Radanovich and others will return this year sometime before April 24, the date that Armenian-Americans consider the anniversary of the tragedy.

Meanwhile, Armenian-Americans are adept at deploying traditional political weapons. There are registered lobbyists, including the Armenian Assembly of America, which spent $200,000 in 1998 on its Washington, D.C., lobbying, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. There's an Armenian-American Political Action Committee, which donated $44,750 to federal candidates in the last congressional session. That isn't a large amount among PACS; however, tied with strategically targeted contributions by individual donors, Armenian-Americans make an impact. The *Washington Post* earlier this year, for instance, reported that Armenian-American donors nationwide had pitched in nearly $200,000 over the past five years to U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, the Kentucky Republican who chairs the Senate panel overseeing foreign aid.

Still at war

Sometimes, the congressional efforts direct aid Armenia's way. Sometimes, those efforts go after Armenia's perceived enemies.

In 1996, for instance, the House approved a Radanovich amendment to its annual foreign aid bill reducing U.S. aid to Turkey by $3 million — the estimated amount Turkey spent on lobbying. The money would be withheld, lawmakers said, until the Turkish government acknowledged the Armenian tragedy. Subtle it wasn't, but it clearly sent a signal.

"Recognition of the genocide by the Republic of Turkey is the key step," Der Mugrdechian said. "Turkish government policy is to deny the genocide, to finance 'scholarship' to blame the victims, and in general not to accept responsibility for the Armenian Genocide."

The amendment, supported by 41 of California's 52 House members, was subsequently deleted during the House and Senate negotiations. Its ultimate defeat, like the defeat of various genocide resolutions, showed how powerful Turkish interests can be in their own right. While they lack the grass-roots power of Armenian-Americans, they make up for it in other ways.

To combat last year's genocide resolution, Turkey hired the former chairmen of the House Appropriations Committee and the House Rules Committee, the impeccably connected Robert Livingston and Gerald Solomon, for $700,000 each. Democrat Stephen Solarz, a former member of what is now the House International Relations Committee, received $400,000 for representing Turkey on a variety of issues.

This month, the old fight resumes.

The Bush precedent

While courting Armenian-American voters a year ago, President George W. Bush declared that "the Armenians were subjected to a genocidal campaign" and promised that as president he "would ensure that our nation properly recognizes the tragic suffering of the Armenian people."

The Armenian National Congress has issued some 100,000 postcards, so members in California and elsewhere can remind Bush that only by "clearly and unambiguously characterizing the Armenian Genocide as a genocide" can the president fulfill his promise.

Will he? For one possible answer, consider how Bush's own father handled Armenian issues.

During his 1988 presidential campaign, the senior George Bush assured the Armenian Assembly of America that "the United States must acknowledge the attempted genocide of the Armenian people." He promised that "the Bush administration will never allow political pressures to prevent our denunciation of crimes against humanity."

Once elected, however, the promises given to a domestic political audience were dropped in favor of international *realpolitik*. The senior Bush backtracked, big time. Suddenly opposing the genocide resolution, he told the U.S. Senate he was "mindful...of the differing views of how the terrible events of 1915-23 should be characterized" and was "sensitive to the close relationship the United States has with our friend and ally, Turkey."

Bush's defense secretary at the time: Dick Cheney. The *New Republic* reported last year that Cheney, while serving as chief executive officer of the energy service company, Halliburton Co., had urged repealing the aid embargo against Azerbaijan, which had been imposed by Armenia's friends in Congress. Now, Vice President Cheney is advising the younger man, President George W. Bush.

"If we push it a little bit harder, maybe we will succeed this time," Radanovich said of his rewritten genocide resolution. "The only thing we have to fear is a call from the president that we remove it from the agenda for strategic reasons."

Michael Doyle is a reporter in the Washington, D.C., bureau of McClatchy Newspapers. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of California bashers and a genre called politics-fiction

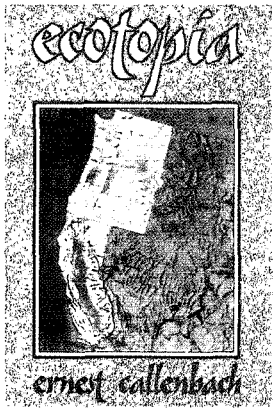
By Susan Rasky

For months and months we have been watching California with amazement, amusement and horror as an electric power shortage reduces it from the nation's most prosperous state to a Third World Country.

— *Wall Street Journal* editorial, March 6, 2001

Nobody does pompous derision quite like the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board, especially when it senses an affront to the free market. So it wasn't altogether surprising that Governor Gray Davis' spot purchase of electricity, his negotiation of long-term energy supply contracts and his plan to take over thousands of miles of electricity transmission lines were enough to send the board into rhetorical overdrive in a particularly snide pronouncement headlined "California's No-Brainer."

Politicians are always fair game, and Davis is more notable than others because so much of his future depends on how he handles the energy mess. But what makes the editorial notable is its unmistakable scorn for the state. "It seems to us that California suffers from three basic problems," the scribes at the *WSJ* sniffed: "A widespread belief that there is no problem....a firmly held notion that if there is a problem, it's not California's and....the misapprehension that if there is a problem, California knows how to fix it."



Good grief! What did we ever do to so offend Wall Street's sensibilities? Aside, that is, from making investment firms and underwriters rich by marketing roughly $3 billion a year in general obligation bonds and planning to sell $10 billion in revenue bonds this summer to finance power contracts. Nobody says we have all the answers, but a little respect please for those of us who think that leaving energy supply entirely to the mercies of the marketplace may not be a perfect solution.

The *Journal's* amused horror calls to mind a charmingly subversive novel written nearly three decades ago about Washington, Oregon and Northern California seceding from the United States. The rebels form an alternative society, Ecotopia, where the female-dominated Survivalist Party runs the government and has reduced the work week to 20 hours.

A best-seller at the time and now something of a cult classic, the book, "Ecotopia," tells the story of Will Weston, a reporter for the New York-based *Times-Post* sent to investigate the self-sustaining, environmentally stable world the rebels have created. Set in 1999, it is a world of Mag-Lev trains, bio-degradable plastics, recyclable clothing and building materials, battery-powered minibuses, sophisticated use of telecommunications and, of course, renewable energy.

"Ecoptopia's" author, Ernest Callenbach, lives in Berkeley and still writes on environmental themes. It was more despair than anger, he says, that prompted the novel. Nobody had ever thought about what an alternative, sustainable world might look like. The only other vision we had was what you might call 'more.' The bleakness of American life is our valuing money so much more than time. Ecotopians have a different version of the time versus money equation."

Callenbach intended "Ecotopia" as a serious blueprint for that alternative society, not just a fanciful account of life."I see this bioregion, the northwest and northern California, as so well equipped to make the transition, that's why I call the book 'politics fiction' not science fiction," he says.

He was wrong, of course, about some critical things — population for one (he assumed closed borders and therefore a declining population) and he never anticipated those that might actually have hastened the world he envisions — huge decreases in tobacco consumption, the deep and growing involvement of religious groups in the environmental movement and the rise of holistic medicine. He would make refinements were he writing today, but there is not much he'd dramatically change, Callenbach says.

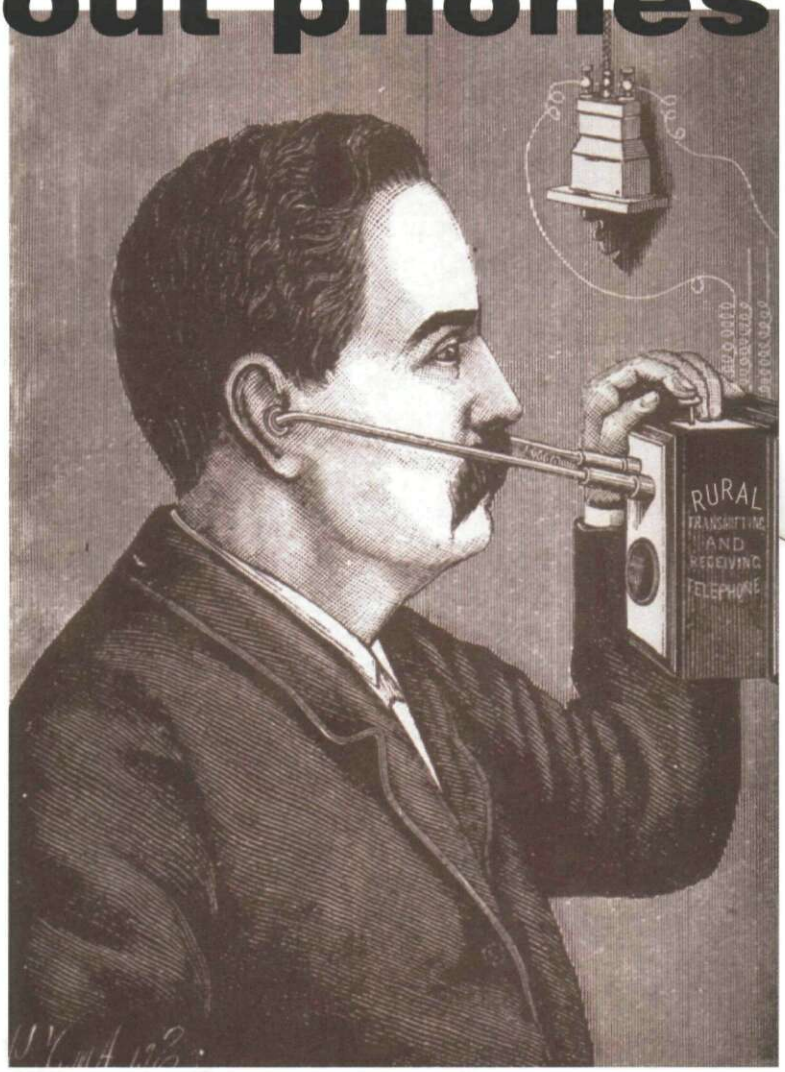
As for California's current energy woes, particularly the governor's pledge that electricity rates will not increase, Callenbach smiles with the calm assurance of one of his own Ecotopians. "The errors of California energy policy antedate Davis by at least two administrations," he says. "There is no way the governor of California can prevent fossil fuel energy from getting more expensive. Sooner or later reality talks to politicians, and what it is saying is get thee to renewable."

It's the kind of thinking that ought to give certain California-bashers the willies.

Contributing editor Susan Rasky teaches journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Life without phones?



As farfetched as that sounds, in some rural parts of California, local telephone service doesn't exist. Instead, residents rely on sporadic cell phones or cumbersome CB-radio telephones to link them to the rest of the world. With pending legislation to wire them into the 21st century, the question becomes: Who pays and at what price?

By Claudia Buck

From her mountaintop paradise on Iowa Hill, Cerise LaCore can see the roaring I-80 freeway in the distance, where droves of drivers, many with cell phones glued to their ears, fly down the freeway.

Iowa Hill, tucked away down a twisty maze of hairpin turns that wind in and out the American River Canyon near Colfax, is tantalizingly close to all the amenities of modern life. So close — just four straight miles from one of California's busiest interstates — yet so far.

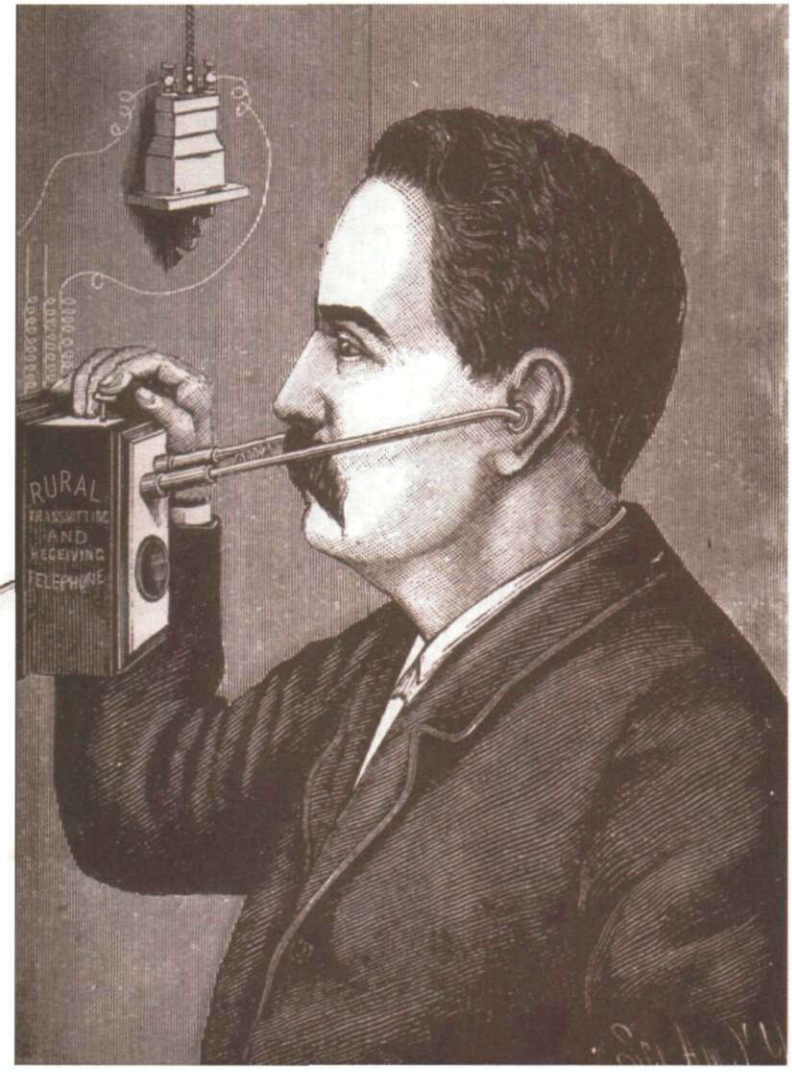
That's because LaCore and her husband, David Wilson — along with the other 70-some fulltime residents of Iowa Hill — are doing the seemingly unthinkable: living without regular phone service. In that respect, life hasn't changed much in nearly 150 years along this pine-studded ridgetop, where gold lured the first settlers back in 1863.

In a world where everyone is wired, in a state that is high-tech's heartland, it's hard to fathom that there still are pockets of California where people live without phone service. Especially given that the state's Public Utilities Code specifically declares the Legislature's intent to provide "widespread availability" of high-quality phone service to every Californian.

"It's crazy. We can put a man on the moon, but we can't run a phone line to Iowa Hill, 10 miles from Colfax?" asks LaCore, a transplanted New Yorker, who spent several years trying to secure telephone lines to her community.

LaCore, a massage therapist, and her husband, a photographer, have lived in Iowa Hill nearly 10 years, commuting down from their hilltop home several times a week to work and school in Roseville and Rocklin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



They chose Iowa Hill for its panoramic view and its unspoiled vistas. They didn't know that no phones were part of the bargain. "When we moved in, the power lines came down to the river. We could see them from our house," said LaCore, "and we just assumed we would eventually link up."

Who's not plugged in?

No one knows exactly how many Californians don't have regular, hardwire phone service. The state Bureau of Audits did a survey in 1999 that estimated some 112,000 Californians live in areas not served by a local telephone company. The Federal Communications Commission, using recent census data, estimated that last year 541,000 Californians were without phone service, but the numbers include those living in cities where phone service is available but who choose not to have it.

Most are concentrated in Northern California's least-populated counties — Sierra, Trinity, Del Norte, Glenn — in off-road hamlets whose names are as colorful as they are hard to find on a map: Big Flat, Whale Gulch, Mad River, Hyampon, Weitchpec.

"We can't get [phone service] into every nook and cranny, every hoot and hollow that people want to live in, but we can get into most of it," said Barry Ross, executive vice president of the California Telephone Association, which represents the state's 21 telephone companies. They range from Pacific Bell, which serves some 17 million customers, to tiny Pinnacles Telephone Company, which provides phone service to just 300 residents.

Even where they're willing, telephone companies have found it both fiscally and physically difficult to string phone line to every Californian who wants it. In some locations, the mountainous terrain is too treacherous to bury cable or erect telephone poles. In others, the heavy snowpack and dense rainfall create maintenance nightmares.

Compared to densely populated urban centers, where long-established phone lines link everyone in close proximity, rural California is a different

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reality.

Residents are few and far between, geographic barriers abound, resulting in what the telephone industry likes to call "high-cost, low-revenue" areas that, even with state and federal subsidies, sometimes don't pencil out.

The rural phone dilemma has been further exacerbated because pay phones are slowly disappearing — not only in California's rural communities but in cities and towns here and across the country, as phone companies find them too costly to maintain for too little revenue. According to the Public Utilities Commission, there were 282,000 pay phones in California in 1998; by last year, that number had dropped to 260,000, a 5.5 percent decrease.

Cerise LaCore outside the Iowa Hills Store, the community's hub.

One of Iowa Hills' rustic cabins

Dialing with difficulty

Left with few options, most of those without regular phone service rely on a variety of less-than-reliable alternatives: erratic cell phones or cumbersome CB-type radio telephones.

"We're back in the Dark Ages of communication," said Chuck Blackburn, a Del Norte County supervisor, who lives with his wife on a 15-acre ranch in Big Flat, a hamlet that's a 45-minute drive from Crescent City and 15 miles from the nearest mailbox, which is where the phone lines end.

Blackburn can use a cell phone on his property, sort of. "If I drive out to a certain point about 100 yards out, and watch it real careful, I get a bounce off Muslatt Mountain and can use my phone." Otherwise, he and neighbors rely on radio telephones that utilize a microphone hooked up to a dial pad.

"We don't say 'over-and-out' or 'Ten-Four' but it's like talking on a CB radio," Blackburn said.

To speak, you press down a lever. To hear your caller, you let go the lever. The delay typically cuts off part of the conversation, but more than likely someone else can fill you in: the line is completely open to anyone on the same radio frequency for miles around. To ensure a private conversation, Blackburn climbs in his truck and drives to town.

"It's a choice we've made to live out here, but we pay taxes like everyone else," said Blackburn, acknowledging the tradeoff in remote living. "We've certainly spoken up [requesting state help in obtaining phone service]. We could really use it."

In an effort to remedy the plight of Blackburn and others, state Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin (D-Duncan Mills), recently introduced AB140, which would set aside $10 million in grants for phoneless communities to acquire telephone infrastructure. The funding would come from a surcharge — as little as 34 cents a month on an average bill — that already appears on every Californian's phone bill. Known as the High-Cost A and B Funds, the surcharges are designed to help telephone companies recover the high cost of serving rural areas and ensure that rates are kept affordable.

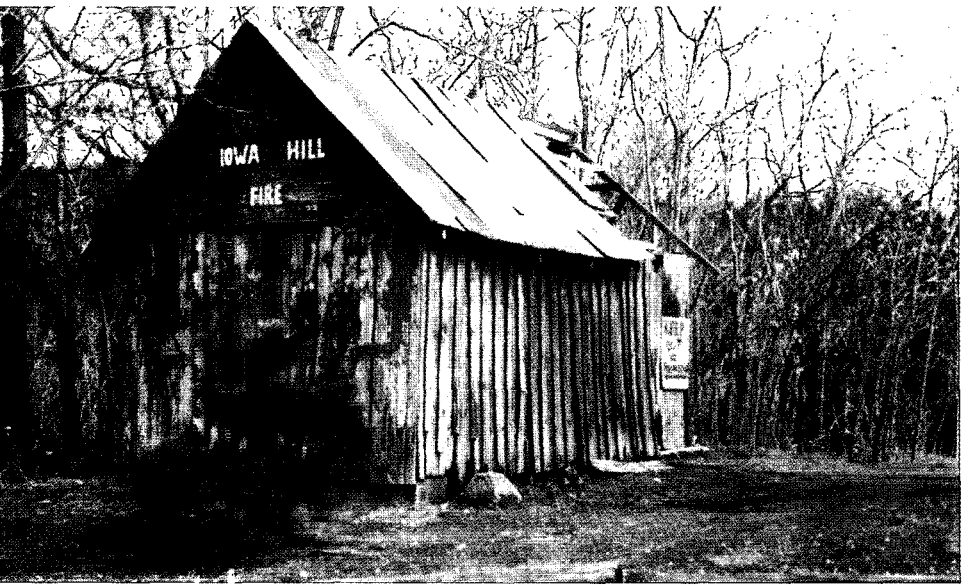
As chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Rural Economic Development, Strom-Martin held hearings in 1999 to illuminate for legislators the difficulties that rural residents face in obtaining something as seemingly simple as phone service. In its report to the Legislature, the committee noted: "Telephones are not generally considered to be a luxury in 21st-century America, yet there is no state program to help remote communities obtain the necessary infrastructure to have telephone service."

That's the intent of Strom-Martin's bill, virtually identical to a measure she carried last year. That bill, endorsed by the state's Public Utilities Commission, sailed through both houses but came unplugged on the governor's desk. Governor Gray Davis vetoed the bill, saying that diverting $10 million from the state's High-Cost Fund could jeopardize payments made to other rural communities, causing increases in their phone bills.

Governor's veto: bunk?

Although Davis acknowledged in his veto that "all Californians should have access to reliable local telephone service," the governor declared that it's simply not possible everywhere. "Regrettably, topography and fiscal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Photos by David Wilson

concerns prohibit providing telephone service to every Californian," Davis said.

That statement is particularly startling, considering that Section 709 of the PUC code declares the state's policy, as defined by the Legislature, is to assure the "widespread availability of high-quality telecommunications service to *all* Californians."

Diplomatically, Strom-Martin said she believes the governor's veto was based on an "inaccurate" staff analysis. But the California Telephone Association's chief called the governor's reasoning "bunk."

"Do you know how much money is in that fund? Upwards of $850 million. Just the interest alone would give you the $10 million [in Strom-Martin's bill]," Ross said.

Strom-Martin said her bill specifically states that the $10 million can be taken from the surcharge fund only after its other financial obligations are met.

The governor's veto left some rural folks fuming. "Just because we're only a county of 13,000 — and most voters up here are Republicans — it's ludicrous to think he can just ignore us," said Trinity County Supervisor Bob Reiss. "It impacts everyone who visits our county, everyone who drives through on the Highway 299 corridor, every 18-wheeler who travels the highway," he said, noting that only one Trinity County community — Weaverville — can pick up a cellular phone signal.

For rural residents like Reiss and Blackburn, living without phone service is more than missing out on private phone chats.

Without dependable hard-wired phones, schools can't connect classroom computers to the Internet; patients in areas without doctors can't be linked to physicians via telemedicine hookups; adults can't sign up for long-distance learning or start an Internet-based business. And without reliable cell phones, stranded travelers and backpackers can't call to report an emergency, forest fires go unreported, and victims trapped in vehicle accidents on lonely roads often wait hours to be rescued.

The rural Digital Divide

For many of these rural residents, the Digital Divide is all too real, a barrier comprised of towering pine trees, steep mountainsides and inclement weather.

"Ever try to get on the Internet without a phone? We're just not part of the great www.highway," said Reiss.

Having lost much of their timber and logging industries, many local officials in these rural counties are eager to diversify into recreation and tourism to bolster their sagging economies. "We'd like to attract artists, writers and film makers," said Reiss, "but when they find out they can't make a [cell] phone call from one of our mountaintops or our lakes, they go elsewhere. That's where we've been for years: losing out."

A spokesman for state Assemblyman Tim Leslie (R-Lake Tahoe), whose Assembly seat and former Senate district includes Iowa Hill, said Strom-Martin's bill would even out the longstanding inequities between rural and urban counties. "It's always been his battle cry," said Jedd Medefind, Leslie's capitol director. "The rural areas don't have the political clout to pull the same resources as urban areas."

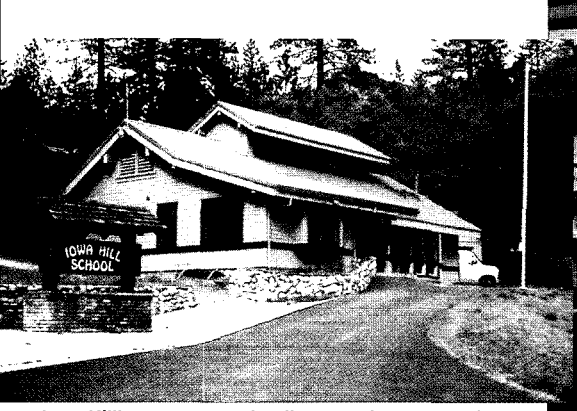
Indeed, that urban versus rural split has echoed throughout the debate on rural phone service. During hearings in 1999, state Assemblyman Rod Wright (D-Los Angeles), chair of the Assembly Utilities and Commerce Committee, was openly skeptical initially, saying that rural residents had made a choice by moving so far from civilization and shouldn't expect the rest of the state to subsidize their lifestyle.

Ironing out the cost differences between serving urban and rural areas is one of the PUC's missions and a number of mechanisms exist to assure that the steeper expense of providing phone service to rural customers isn't passed on to those in other parts of the state. Small telephone companies can tap the state's High-Cost Fund and also can obtain low-interest loans through the federal Rural Utilities Service to help pay for switching equipment and burying lines underground. Without those loans and subsidies, "we could never hope to recoup our expenditures. You'd have to charge 'em hundreds of dollars a month just for local phone service," said Eric Wolfe, vice president of Ducor Telephone Company, which serves some 1,300 customers scattered in such locales as Rancho Tehama near Red Bluff and Kennedy Meadows, a mountain community tucked into the southeast corner of Tulare County off Highway 395.

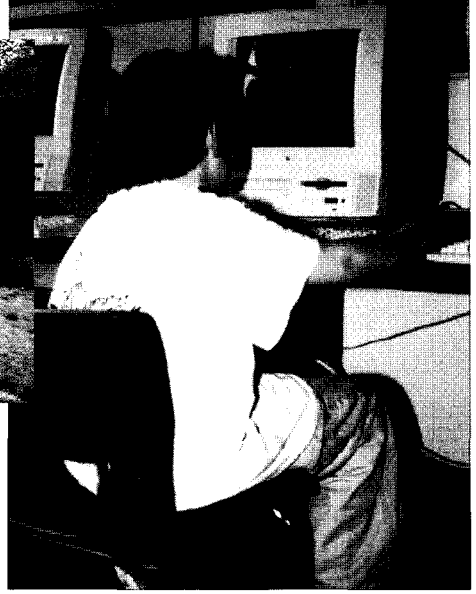
Left out of the loop

Beginning at the turn of the century, the state was divided into telephone service areas — geographic regions assigned to individual telephone companies — that spread as the state's population grew. Generally, phone

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Iowa Hill's one-room schoolhouse, where each of its eight students has a computer. . .



. . . but no hookup to the Internet.

companies are obligated to provide phone service to those communities within their boundaries. But as the state's population crept into outlying areas, away from urban centers, many individuals found themselves outside phone service boundaries.

Kennedy Meadows, a Sierra Nevada community of some 130 households, is one of those. An out-of-state engineering consultant, flying over the area in a small plane, first spotted the community, whose residents include retirees as well as scientists working at the nearby China Lake naval air station. When the consultant wasn't able to bid on supplying phone service to the area, tiny Ducor Telephone Company stepped in.

That was in 1993; it would take another six years for the PUC to sign off on its approval.

Kirby Smith, a retired telecommunications consultant in El Dorado Hills, worked on the plan and contends the PUC unnecessarily delayed the project with endless hearings and needless requirements. Smith and others contend the PUC isn't looking out for the interests of consumers.

"The PUC has not taken a leadership role in developing the infrastructure for telemedicine, long-distance learning, telecommuting... We are far, far behind other states," he said. "Without fair policies that promote developing and deploying [telephone] infrastructure, we will have digital have- and have-nots."

PUC spokeswoman Trina Horner said that's certainly not the intent of PUC President Loretta Lynch, who took office a little over a year ago. "She is very eager to start working with rural counties to be sure they get phone service. She considers it a high priority," according to Horner.

As for Kennedy Meadows, where the first telephone service was plugged in less than two years ago, in September 1999, the PUC says its policies, including the drawn-out hearing process, are designed to ensure that a small company such as Ducor doesn't acquire too much debt and hurt its other ratepayers in the process.

Stumbling over costs

One of the biggest stumbling blocks to linking rural California to telephones is the cost. Under PUC regulations, the first 700 to 1,000 feet of phone line from a telephone company's main line typically is provided free; after that, the customer usually pays a per-foot charge that can range from as little as 50 cents per foot to the full, actual cost of installation. For some remote dwellers, it adds up to tens of thousands of dollars.

Reiss recalls that shortly after moving onto their 160-acre property, he and his wife paid a visit to the local telephone company office to inquire about phone service. They were told it was possible and were quoted a per-mile cost for the hookup. On the drive home, Reiss' wife did the math: to land a phone line would cost them $70,000.

In Iowa Hill, LaCore abandoned her effort to hard-wire the community after the price tag became too high. Initial estimates by GTE (now Verizon) put the fee to link up to phone lines at roughly $350 per household; however, not everyone in Iowa Hill wanted phone service, which pushed the cost for those who did up to $6,000-$7,000 apiece.

"People feel particularly entitled to telephone service in the first place," said Jack Leutza, the PUC's telecommunications director in San Francisco, "but there's a big cost issue involved. The question becomes: Who pays and how much?"

In the eyes of Keith Rashall, a metal fabricator who recently succeeded – after some 15 years of on-again, off-again effort — to get underground phone lines into Whale Gulch, a rugged, mountainous community near the Lost Coast region of Mendocino County, no one should be left out of the telecommunications loop. "We chose to live here, but should we be penalized for that? If we move to rural areas but can participate in the great Internet economy, nobody will be subsidizing us."

Claudia Buck is managing editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

CONCUR, Inc. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE

CONCUR

Negotiating Effective Environmental Agreements

May 3-4, 2001
U.C. Berkeley, Clark Kerr Campus

CONCUR Inc., a leading practitioner in environmental dispute resolution, offers an intensive training course to build the skills of mid-career professionals.

- **Designing a Negotiation Strategy**
- **Improving Your Negotiation Style**
- **Using Coalitions**
- **Participating in Multi-Party Negotiations**

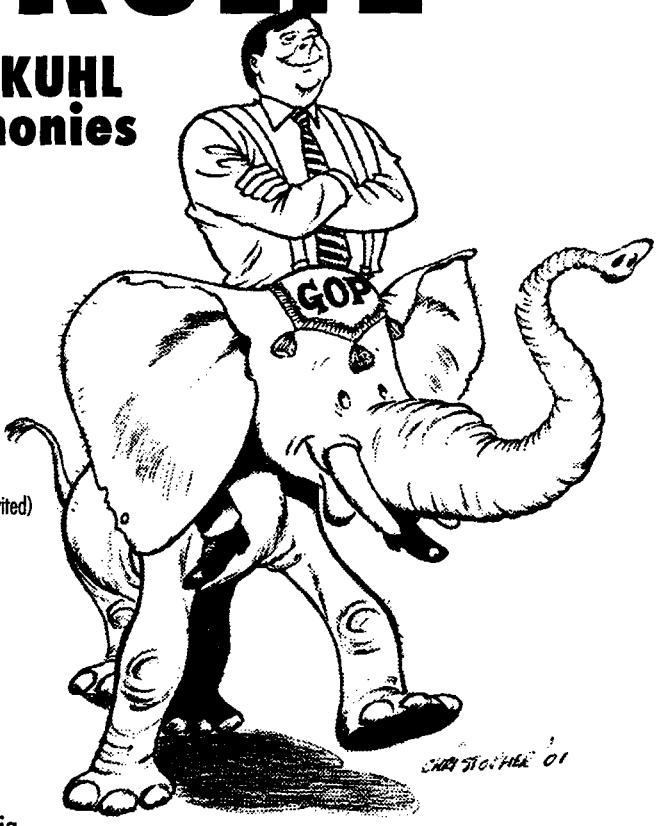
www.concurinc.com
1832 Second St. Berkeley, CA 94710
• Tel: (510) 649-8008
Fax: (510) 649-1980 • Email: concur@concurinc.net

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOT STUFF! The California ROAST

FIRES UP FOR SENATOR JIM BRULTE

WITH **SENATOR SHEILA KUHL**
Master of Ceremonies



THE MAHARAJAH OF CUCAMONGA

WHEN TUESDAY MAY 29, 2001
6:00 PM - Reception, Jazz Combo
7:30 PM - Dinner
8:30 PM - Program

ROASTERS Governor Gray Davis (invited)
San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown (invited)
Honorable Jim Rogan (invited)
Attorney General Bill Lockyer
Greg Lucas, San Francisco Chronicle

VIDEO SPOT Honorable Pete Wilson
W?

WHERE Radisson Hotel, Sacramento, California

HOW MUCH Sponsor: Reserved Table for Ten: $1,750
Patron: Reserved Half-Table for Five: $875
Individual Tickets: Open Seating: $175

WHY Proceeds from the event benefit CAPITOL FOCUS, a non-profit, non-partisan political awareness program serving a cross-section of California youth. Contributions are tax deductible to full extent allowed by the law. (Federal ID #23 718-2049).

CAPITOL FOCUS

CALL NOW TO RESERVE SEATS

916-443-2229

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Riordan's gift to successor: a to-do list

By Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

When Richard Riordan ran for mayor of Los Angeles in 1993, the lodestar of his campaign was the slogan, "Tough enough to turn L.A. around." From the debilitating economic recession of the early '90s. From anxiety over urban crime. From the loss of civic trust in the wake of the 1991 police beating of Rodney King. From damage done to the city, and its veneer of multiethnic tolerance, by the 1992 riots that erupted after four police officers were acquitted in the King beating.

Now Riordan, a two-term incumbent prohibited by law from running again, is poised to hand over the mayor's office. What lies ahead and remains undone for L.A.'s next mayor?

Aided by a national upturn, Riordan has enjoyed some success in improving L.A.'s economy. To make the city business-friendly, he established a team to work with companies to flatten bureaucratic hurdles. He assumed a lead role in spearheading downtown development.

Los Angeles itself has remained a piece of unfinished business for more than 150 years.

Still, Riordan will leave L.A.'s new leader a list of larger issues destined to impact the city's economic viability. These include a lack of affordable housing, urban sprawl and a clunky tax code that Riordan and the City Council couldn't agree on reforming. In good times, money and resources to address these concerns are easier to come by. But the next mayor will not benefit from the kind of expansion that helped Riordan boost the city's economic health. Riordan also will leave unresolved the widening gap between the city's haves and have-nots.

Another touchy issue for the next mayor: expansion of L.A.'s airport. Riordan's promise that concrete would be poured before his term ended was scaled back to a commitment to win project approvals before he left office. Now the future of LAX will be in the hands of the new mayor.

Education was a high priority for Riordan even before he won public office. But once inside City Hall, he saw his reform agenda thwarted by the reality that the city's chief executive has no real authority over the independent Los Angeles Unified School District. Riordan backed his own slate of school board candidates and won. Now the future of the city depends, in part, on how Riordan's hand-picked school board behaves.

Riordan's frustration with school bureaucrats has been matched by his impatience with L.A.'s unwieldy city government. The mayor's business instincts told him executive authority ought t o be concentrated in the city's CEO rather than shared with a powerful city council. That led him to champion charter reform. Riordan's successor will be the first to fully enjoy the increased control the mayor has acquired.

It will be up to the new administration to make a success of government reorganization — particularly the creation of about 100 neighborhood councils — or risk efforts by several communities to secede from the city of Los Angeles. Breakaway proposals from the Hollywood, San Fernando Valley and Harbor areas have all moved forward and the Local Agency Formation Commission is in the process of deciding whether they will appear on the November 2002 ballot, just over a year into the new mayor's term.

In his first campaign, Riordan pledged a beefed-up police force. But critics say that, as a result, the police ranks expanded too fast, contributing to the Rampart police corruption scandal. The next mayor will have to deal with implementing the sweeping reforms ordered by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Rampart came to light on the watch of Police Chief Bernard Parks, Riordan's choice to replace Chief Willie Williams, the outsider brought in by Mayor Tom Bradley after the King riots. Parks' tenure has been plagued by an increase in crime and flagging morale. The new mayor will decide the chief's future when Parks' term ends in 2002.

There *is* unfinished business from Riordan awaiting Los Angeles' next mayor. But the city itself has remained a piece of unfinished business for more than 150 years. It is ever-changing and ever-challenging. Riordan relished the challenge but was often frustrated by the slow pace of change. Soon a new leader with a different style and new priorities will take a turn at shaping L.A.'s future.

Contributing editor Sherry Bebitch Jeffe is senior scholar at the School of Policy, Planning and Development, University of Southern California. Comments may be sent to **edit@statenet.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

responsabilidad

Adults have an important responsibility to children to communicate accurate information about healthy adolescent sexuality, abstinence, contraception and disease prevention. We need to encourage young people to act responsibly in all areas of their lives, but particularly when it comes to their sexual behavior.

One of the ways to do this is to give them the information and tools they need to make healthy, informed decisions.

The reality is that many teens choose to be sexually active. Providing accurate information and access to contraceptives allows sexually active teens to be responsible for their health and their future. **What we can do:** Dedicate time and resources to programs in your community that help teens make responsible decisions and avoid unhealthy behavior. Support policies that encourage teaching comprehensive sexuality education in our schools and communities. Help the teens in your family develop healthy values and attitudes about their own sexuality and learn how to prevent unplanned pregnancies through healthy, responsible sexual behavior. Provide a healthy future for all young people by supporting community health services that meet teenagers' needs, including making contraceptives easily accessible to sexually active teens.

GET REAL
A OUT TEEN PREGNANCY

Teen pregnancy is also an adult problem. Let's solve it together.

To learn more, visit our website at www.letsgetreal.org

The "Get Real About Teen Pregnancy" public education campaign is funded by a grant to Deen+Black from The California Wellness Foundation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Disarming with charm: the Bush method

by Dana Wilkie

When George W. Bush first took the Texas governor's job in 1995, he had virtually no government experience, had few relationships with state lawmakers and worked in a Capitol controlled mostly by Democrats.

In other words — all the ingredients for a failed first term.

When one of those Democrats, education committee chairman Paul Sadler, accepted Bush's invitation to chat about schools, he was understandably leery of Bush's thin resume and his plan to give vouchers to parents. But after one conversation in Bush's wood-paneled office, Sadler was so impressed with the new governor's grasp of school financing intricacies that the two became close colleagues who engineered significant changes for Texas schools.

That visit with Sadler many years back was not unlike the visits Bush made to House and Senate Democratic leaders shortly after his inaugural last January. Or the recent invitation he extended to the Senate's leading liberal, Edward Kennedy, to view a movie at the White House. The fast friendship he forged with Sadler may be replicated repeatedly in the nation's Capitol if the early returns from Democrats are any gauge. Wasn't that Kennedy who emerged from his meeting with Bush to announce that the pair had much in common on education issues? Wasn't it George Miller, the liberal congressman from California, who somewhat fondly revealed that Bush had tagged him with the nickname "Big George"?

Those who say Bush's congenial style will not go far in shark-infested Washington waters — or that the president will merely use style to for instance — did not watch Bush in action in Texas.

What Bush lacked in experience, he made up for with personality, but also perseverance and smarts. Bush made an extraordinary effort to get to know his adversaries, those who could ruin his plans for tax cuts and higher student test scores. He remembered names. He remembered agendas. He was on time.

But when the backslapping and nicknaming were done, Bush owed his Texas success to his ability to focus on a handful of goals with popular appeal. To sketch the outlines of his vision, then delegate. To listen to other points of view. To hold fast to the core of his plan, while compromising on the fringes.

"Lawmakers liked him," said former Bush campaign consultant Mike Toomey. "But you don't snow legislators because you're nice. He knew what he wanted. He knew what was in the bills. And he could go toe to toe with [them]."

Bush worked the media in the same way. It did not prevent unflattering stories, but it took the sting out of the typically contentious relationship between politician and reporter. During a press conference, the governor would pivot toward a journalist with a cocked eyebrow and a pointed finger. "Always good to see you," the governor would say, with a saucy grin that suggested the two shared some inside joke. He did the same massaging on the campaign trail. The Monday before the presidential election, as Bush's campaign plane jetted to Austin, the candidate emerged from the first-class section and one-by-one, shook the hand of each scribe, photographer, producer and camera person on board. He thanked them for their coverage. He wished them luck. He addressed many of them by name. Bush was demonstrating the sort of social intelligence — not "charm" — that makes it easier for adversaries to work together.

There is shrewd calculation in Bush's so-called "charm offensive." And calculating is what Bush must be.

Style over substance? The results are in the record: Five years after Bush became governor, he had won $1.7 billion in tax relief, could claim victory on juvenile justice reform and earned plaudits for his program to help public schoolchildren with reading. He coasted to re-election — endorsed by the late Bob Bullock, the powerful Democratic lieutenant governor who became one of Bush's close friends.

There is shrewd calculation in Bush's so-called "charm offensive." And calculating is what Bush must be in a closely divided Congress, where Democrats can easily sink his prized programs. By personalizing relationships, Bush strips some of the animosity from upcoming battles. He makes it easier to say "no" without hurting feelings, or earning enemies. And he ensures that his opponents object to his policies, not his personality.

If the essence of politics is the art of knowing how to get what you want, then Bush's "charm offensive" is far more substance than style.

Contributing editor Dana Wilke is a Washington correspondent for the San Diego Union-Tribune. *Comments may be sent to* **edit@statenet.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We help you do what you do best.

California-American Water Company can handle all your water and wastewater needs, so you can handle everything else.

California-American Water Company (Cal-Am) can help water and wastewater assets work better for your community. That means you can focus on what you do best, while we make sure your constituents get excellent service at a fair price.

At Cal-Am, we manage water resources from all aspects, exercising care and respect for the environment every step of the way.

Californians from Coronado to Carmel depend on us every day to care for their hometowns and partner with their community.

There are many ways Cal-Am can work with you: helping with your billing, meter reading, and water quality testing, contract management or asset ownership. Private financing of water and wastewater systems means your city gets better infrastructure, with less drain on city revenues or bonding capacity.

Cal-Am is part of American Water Works Company, Inc. (NYSE:AWK), our nation's largest investor-owned water company. We team with local governments to deliver quality drinking water and superior wastewater treatment to more than 10 million residents in 23 states, including many of your neighbors right here in California.

Cal-Am would like the opportunity to partner with your community. Please call us at 800.972.9972 x 2470 to see if we can help with your water and wastewater needs.

A partner for all your community water needs.

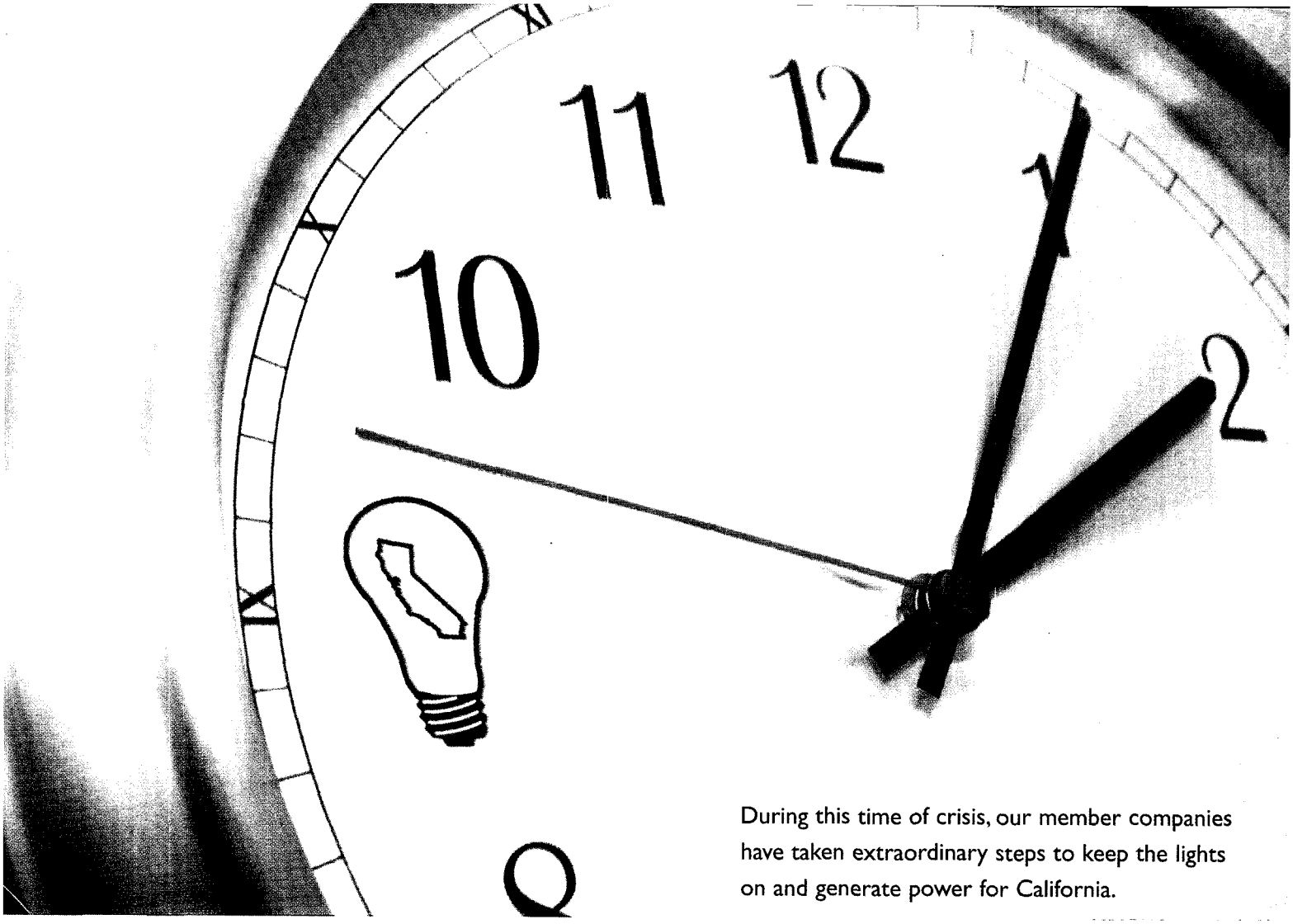
Contract Services • Operations and Management • Asset Purchase

California-American Water Company

A subsidiary of the American Water Works Company

www.calamwater.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



We're Working 24/7 to Keep the Lights On

During this time of crisis, our member companies have taken extraordinary steps to keep the lights on and generate power for California.

According to an independent report by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, power plant operators "accelerated maintenance and incurred additional expense to accommodate the ISO's operating needs ... [taking] whatever steps necessary to bring the generating facilities back on-line as soon as possible."

Rather than using tax money, our member companies have invested billions of private-sector dollars to buy, modernize and build power plants in California. And we're preparing to spend billions more to ensure that California can keep pace with its growing demand for clean, reliable and affordable electricity.

We're part of the solution.

INDEPENDENT
ENERGY
PRODUCERS
1112 "I" Street, Suite 380 • Sacramento, CA 95814 • 916-448-9499
www.turnonthetruth.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED